

JUNE 1962

MONTHLY REVIEW

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VOL. 14

CLASS OF '62

THE EDITORS

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A GREAT AMERICAN

PAUL M. SWEEZY

MARXISM AND EXISTENTIALISM

ADAM SCHAFF

Idle Machines

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EDITORS: Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy.

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Burning Conscience by Claude Eatherly and Günther Anders will be in the bookstores on June 4th. And for once this is not just a figure of speech when applied to an MR book. *Burning Conscience* has been mentioned in recent articles in *Newsweek* (April 23), and *Parade* (May 20), the Sunday magazine supplement that reaches some 11 million newspaper readers. In addition, we have sent to bookstores all over the country copies of a large ad that will appear in the *New York Times* on June 3rd and 4th. As a result of these and other efforts to publicize the book—the fact that it has already appeared (very successfully) in 12 other countries hasn't hurt—we have received many more prepublication orders from many more bookstores than ever before. This doesn't mean that there is anything like complete coverage, however, and you can help by checking your own bookstore and urging the buyer to stock the book if he isn't already doing so. We would like to ask you also to see that your local or college library gets the book, and to bring it to the attention of any peace organizations of which you are a member.

Still available at prepublication prices: Harvey O'Connor's two books
(Continued on Inside Back Cover)

TO THE CLASS OF 1962

You young men and women, about a half a million of you, who will be receiving degrees this month from the nation's institutions of higher learning, you are the lucky ones, the ones to whom the good jobs and the positions of influence and power are open. From your ranks will come what C. Wright Mills called the "power elite" of tomorrow. You will be providing the nation's leadership, deciding its future, and perhaps—such is the position of the United States in the world today—that of the rest of mankind as well.

How have your years in college prepared you for this heavy responsibility? All the evidence that has come to our attention would seem to indicate that the answer is, very badly indeed.

There is no need to belabor the obvious. The world *is* in a critical state. A handful of people have the power to destroy civilization, perhaps even the human race itself. Everywhere, the poor and the oppressed are struggling to assert their right to equality and a decent life. Civil wars and revolutions are smoldering or raging in various parts of the globe. Any one of them might explode into the third and probably final world war. Meanwhile, a frightful arms race takes its deadly course. You *must* know all this, and yet what do you do about it?

As far as most of you are concerned, the answer is simple: absolutely nothing. It is true that there has been a revival of social consciousness and political activity on American campuses during the last two years, centering around the issues of discrimination and the threat of war. These are certainly the key issues, not only domestically but globally. And those of you who have committed yourselves to the struggle for civil rights and peace, often under difficult conditions, certainly deserve admiration and gratitude. What is terribly distressing is that there are so few of you. A survey of "student social action and political movements across the nation," the first installment of which was published in the *New York Times* of May 14th, found that the proportion of students involved varies from 1 to 10 percent. Put it the other way round, that from 90 to 99 percent

are *not* involved. In the words of the survey: "The vast majority of American students remains quiet, inactive, and uncommitted."

How is it possible to remain "quiet, inactive, and uncommitted" when the issues at stake involve not only your own existence but what is infinitely more important, the welfare and indeed the very existence of the human race? The spark that touched off the revival of campus social action was the first lunch counter sit-in by four Negro students in Greensboro, North Carolina, on February 1, 1960. What they wanted was very simple, very elementary, something guaranteed in the Constitution and without which all claims to democracy are false and hypocritical. They were your fellow students, needing your support in a just cause. Why didn't 90 percent of you give them your support, immediately and wholeheartedly? How can you explain this?

Perhaps the author of the *New York Times* survey comes close to the truth when she writes:

The wonder is that there are any student movements here at all. Europe, Asia, and Latin America historically breed students who can and have overthrown governments. Neither American parents nor college administrations encourage such political activity.

In the United States, the fundamental concept of higher education is what one sociologist called "a four-year moratorium from the real world."

If this is indeed the explanation of your apathy and inaction, that your society has deliberately isolated you from the real world and trained you to ignore it, then we must conclude that in the most important sense your education, far from being finished, has only just begun. For you are now going to enter the real world whether you or your elders like it or not, and in due course you are going to assume responsibility for your country's role in it. You had better try to learn not only what the headlines tell us every day, that the world is in a deepening crisis, but what causes the crisis and how it can be controlled and eventually resolved.

We do not believe that these momentous subjects can be fully discussed in a brief communication such as this. Nor do we presume to address you because we think we "know all the

answers," still less because we are under an illusion that we speak for any large or important segment of United States opinion. Nevertheless, we feel that we have a valid claim on your attention, and we would like to explain why.

We consider ourselves to be what may be called nondoc-trinaire Marxists. Marx, we believe, put the study of history and society on a qualitatively new and altogether more fruitful basis than it had been before him. Important additions and advances have been made by his followers in all parts of the globe. By now, there has developed a great intellectual tradition which is none the less real for being difficult to define and delimit. Marxists have certain methodological principles in common, agree on a large body of factual findings, and perhaps most important, share a certain "vision" of the human drama and whither it is tending. For our part, we consider this tradition to be strong enough and broad enough to contain differences and disagreements even on matters of great importance. We do not decry these differences, nor do we believe that there is any sense in trying to resolve them by exegetical appeals to authority. On the contrary, we believe that vigorous discussion and debate among Marxists can only serve the cause of science and truth. Finally, we believe that Marxism involves a commitment, which in the final analysis takes precedence over all other commitments, to work and struggle for the emancipation and welfare of the oppressed and underprivileged, here and abroad, now and in the future.

"So what?" you may ask. Just this: while the intellectual position just sketched has relatively few representatives in the United States, and hardly more than a handful on the faculties of American universities, in most of the rest of the world, it has a large and growing number of adherents, including many of the best and ablest scientists, teachers, artists, professionals, and students. This is true of the Communist countries, where the old-line dogmatists of the Stalin era are rapidly losing their authority and will sooner or later be stripped of their power as well. It is true of the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe, where it may not be too strong to speak of a renaissance of creative Marxism, even if the ambit of the movement is as yet somewhat narrowly restricted. Above all, it is true of

Japan and of the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In many of these countries, it is no exaggeration to say that everything that is alive, vigorous, exciting, hopeful in the intellectual and cultural spheres, either falls within the Marxian tradition or derives from efforts to meet the Marxian challenge. As these countries pass through their socialist revolutions—as inevitable in the 20th century as were the bourgeois revolutions of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries—the Marxian view of the world, at least in its general contours, will come to be as widely, one might almost say as unconsciously, accepted throughout these regions as bourgeois faith in individualism and progress used to be accepted in the United States.

Now, we do not claim to speak for all or any of the Marxists who constitute such a vital and dynamic element in the intellectual life of most of the world outside the United States. But we know from much experience—from travel, from correspondence, from reactions to MR as well as to our books and other writings—that we are in *basic* agreement with them and they with us; we know that while most American intellectuals feel a sense of estrangement among Latin American or Japanese or Indonesian students,* we on the contrary have a

* It is to their credit that President Kennedy and his brother Robert have recognized this and have understood that it is an important, not a trivial, phenomenon. Witness the following excerpts from the President's press conference on February 21, 1962: "Q—The Attorney General, your brother, sir, has encountered evidence of a certain amount of hostility from student groups in various countries. Inasmuch as this has happened before with other American visitors in the past administration, have you given any thought to what it is about us that students in particular seem to resent? A—Well, one of the reasons that I was anxious to have the Attorney General make the trip was because of this very—rather curious factor, because you would think that the students who are intellectually curious would be attracted by a free society. . . . What has also interested me is the stereotype of the United States; it's a view of the United States almost fifty years old. And there's no doubt that it is a Marxist-oriented, even in those cases where they may not be Communists. There are many explanations for it. In the first place these were colonial areas; they were held under subjugation in many cases by Western powers. . . . And I don't think that the students have caught up with the tremendous changes which have taken place in the United States in the last fifty years, or with the fallacies in the Marxist system which have become obvious in the last twenty years. . . ." Has it occurred to the President to ask why Marxism has spread so rapidly during precisely the years when he thinks its fallacies became so "obvious?"

sense of acceptance and belonging despite what might seem to be formidable barriers of language, social customs, etc. We are, in a word, "in tune" with them, and we feel confident that our views of what has caused and is causing the deepening world crisis, and of how it can be controlled and eventually resolved are very much like theirs, in substance if not in every detail. And we feel even more confident that you ought to know what they think about these matters. They are your opposite numbers in many lands, and like you they will be assuming increasing responsibility in the years ahead. Make no mistake: to dismiss them as misguided children, as the Messrs. Kennedy seem inclined to do, or to imagine that they can be wheedled out of their convictions by the Voice of America or itinerant intellectuals from the United States would be a terrible mistake. Such methods will breed the very anti-Americanism they are intended to combat. You must learn to take your contemporaries in other parts of the world *seriously*, and that means that you must make a serious effort to understand them and to come to terms with them. That is the unfinished part of your education. And that is also why we dare make a claim on your attention: we believe we can help you get started on your post-graduate course.

What, then, is the cause of the world crisis?

Most Americans, trained like Pavlov's dog to react to certain stimuli in certain ways, would probably answer: "Communism." The answer will not stand the most elementary tests of evidence and logic. Historically, the world crisis dates back at least to the outbreak of World War I in 1914. At that time, there was no Communist country, and the left wing of the international socialist movement, which later adopted the name of Communist, was still very weak—a minority within a minority. As a serious force on the world scene, in a word, Communism was a *result* not a cause of the crisis. Perhaps it will be argued that, once in existence, Communism then became the dynamic force in the further development of the crisis? Not at all. The dynamic force in the next phase was provided by Japan in Asia and Germany in Europe, rabidly anti-Communist powers seeking to re-divide the world in their own favor. Their open military aggressions precipitated World War II, and once again

it was only as a *result* of the war that Communism spread to other countries and continents. Nor was it a Communist power that invented and first used atomic weapons, thus giving to mankind the means to collective suicide and laying the groundwork for the deadly nuclear arms race in which we are now entrapped. The world crisis would assuredly have taken a different form if the Bolsheviks had not triumphed in Russia in 1917. Perhaps the most plausible hypothesis is that in the absence of the forced-march industrialization of Russia which the Bolsheviks imposed upon a weary and reluctant people, Nazi Germany would have conquered all of Europe, and Germany and Japan together all of Asia. Whether the United States would also have fallen, or whether much of the world would by now have been destroyed by the increasing nuclearization of a continuing war may be left to the individual imagination. The point is that even if there had been no Communist revolution in Russia, there is no reason whatever to believe that the crisis would be less devastating, less protracted, or less threatening to the future of the human race. Rather the contrary.

If Communism is not the cause of the crisis, what is? Recognizing that ours is not an answer but only the framework for an answer, we have no hesitation in replying: capitalist imperialism. The evidence in support is overwhelming. The division of the world into developed and underdeveloped countries, which lies at the heart of the crisis, was the direct result of the long series of imperialist conquests that began with the Portuguese and Spanish expansions of the 16th century and continued through the rape of Africa in the 19th century. And the two world wars which brought the crisis to a head grew out of the internecine struggles of the great imperialist powers among themselves for territory, colonies, spheres of influence. Seen in this perspective, Communism appears not merely as a *result* rather than the cause of the crisis; it appears as the method chosen by an ever larger segment of humanity to *escape* from the crisis and to create a better world. For Communism has two aspects, the negative and the positive. The negative aspect is the overthrow of imperialist or imperialist-backed regimes, in effect a contracting out of the old order of

exploitation and war; the positive aspect is the building up of a new society on the basis of socialized property and economic planning.

This, you may be sure, is the way a growing—and we would guess a rapidly growing—proportion of your contemporaries outside the United States see matters. And it leads them to interpret this country's anti-Communism, increasingly the sole rationale and purpose of both foreign and domestic policy, very differently from the way most Americans, including no doubt most of you, interpret it. If Communism is essentially an attempt to escape from the crisis and to create a better world, anti-Communism is an attempt to prevent change, to maintain the bad old system of exploitation and war. And since this bad old system *must* be changed as a precondition to human progress and even survival, it follows that whoever sets up anti-Communism as the overriding principle of thought and action thereby brands himself as an enemy of the human race.

You may think this conclusion far-fetched, the product of logic rather than observation. You know that you yourselves have only good intentions towards the human race, and you dismiss as absurd the suggestion that any significant number of your countrymen are in this respect different from you. Unfortunately, it is not a question of good intentions. It is a question of actions and their objective, observable effects. And here the logical theory to which you take exception is borne out by every day's newspaper. It is the United States that refuses to accept the outcome of World War II and rearms a revenge-seeking Germany ruled by the very same oligarchy that has already plunged the world into two disastrous blood-lettings. It is the United States that invents one pretense after another to reject any form of disarmament and in the meanwhile keeps the deadly nuclear arms race going by insisting on its right to maintain massive superiority in atomic striking power. It is the United States that supports every rotten ruling class and corrupt regime in the world. And it is the United States that seeks with implacable hostility to crush every attempt by the wretched and the hungry to overthrow their domestic and foreign exploiters and to establish a society which will genuinely serve its members. You may justify all these policies and actions in the name of

anti-Communism; in much of the rest of the world, they are simply so many proofs that anti-Communism is really anti-humanism.

You have been told over and over again that all who feel this way about anti-Communism, and hence about the United States as the leading preacher and practitioner of the doctrine, are therefore Communists. It is not true. They differ on many things and belong to many political parties. To a large number, perhaps even a majority, the Communist road out of the crisis as it has been pioneered in the present Soviet-bloc countries, is not the only road. Even within what was once the monolithic structure of Communism, highly significant differences on questions of method and tactics have appeared in the last two or three years. In the period ahead, it seems to us, there is likely to be more, not less, diversity in what may be called the movement of escape. But there is also likely to be greater unity and greater firmness on two central issues: *some* escape route has to be found, and it *must* involve the end of the old system of imperialist exploitation of some countries and peoples by others.*

At the present time, the United States is blocking *all* the roads of escape from the crisis. That is why Attorney General Kennedy, returning from his recent trip around the world, found it necessary to report to the annual luncheon of the Associated Press on March 23rd:

Despite all the effort that is made by your organization and the effort that is made by the U.S.I.A., by the Voice of America, and by many others to bring the truth to many of these countries, I was overwhelmed by the lack of understanding, the misinforma-

* Spokesmen for the American Establishment can be counted upon at this point to raise the question of "Communist imperialism." What about Hungary? What about Tibet? The questions simply miss the point. One may think what one likes about the wisdom or morality of Soviet and Chinese military moves in Hungary and Tibet, the fact remains that in neither case did they have the purpose or the effect of installing or perpetuating the rule of an exploiting class. Rather the contrary. And in neither case has the intervening country established a relationship of exploitation vis-à-vis the intervened country. This is the reason why students in the underdeveloped countries, to the intense annoyance of American spokesmen, resolutely (and rightly) refuse to equate Soviet intervention in Hungary with, say, United States intervention in Cuba.

tion, that exists in many of these countries throughout the world that we visited. (*New York Times*, March 24, 1962.)

Only it is not “lack of understanding” or “misinformation” that accounts for the attitudes which Mr. Kennedy found so distressing. On the contrary, it is understanding based on correct information. Not all the efforts of the AP and the U.S. Information Agency and the Voice of America and all the others can hide from the peoples of the world that the situation in which they live is becoming increasingly intolerable, and that it is U.S. economic and military might, and that alone, which prevents them from changing it.

If this is a correct interpretation—and we in common with literally millions of people all over the world believe that it is—then the only thing that can save the United States from defeat and disgrace and/or the world from disaster, is a *fundamental* change in America’s global policy. The roads of escape from the world crisis must be unblocked, which means simply that the U.S. must stop intervening with arms and dollars to prop up privileged oligarchies that batten off the toil and sweat of their own peoples. If all the roads are opened, there is no reason to fear that only Communist roads will be traveled, nor that all the escaping countries will unite in one great power bloc bent on conquering the world. The spread of Communism, like the spread of Christianity in its day, has already brought diversity with it: the notion of a communized world run with an iron hand from Moscow can now be clearly recognized as the bogeyman it always was. As other peoples throw off their foreign and domestic exploiters and take charge of their own destinies, still further diversity and experimentation with economic institutions and political forms is sure to follow.

Ladies and gentlemen of the graduating class, the human race is now threatened with destruction. At the very same time, the vast majority of it is ready—scientifically, technologically, politically, morally—to leave this nightmare behind and to enter into a new era of peace, progress, and enlightenment. It is the responsibility of our country to decide whether this bright prospect shall be realized. And that means that it will soon be *your* responsibility.

(May 15, 1962)

A GREAT AMERICAN

BY PAUL M. SWEETZ

Most North Americans—to use the Latin American expression for the people of the United States—have probably never heard of Lázaro Cárdenas. And most of those who have heard of him probably think of him as a has-been who as an old man has become either a tool or a dupe of the Communists.

They could not be more wrong. The former President of Mexico (1934-1940) is a power not only in Mexico but throughout Latin America. Far from being a dupe or tool of anyone, he is a man of massive strength and independence. He is not even an old man. Relatively young when he was elected President one year after Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in the United States, Cárdenas in his mid-sixties is as vigorous and active as many a man ten years or more his junior.

Cárdenas's position in the Mexican political scene is unique and likely to remain so. Political power in Mexico is monopolized by the Party of Revolutionary Institutions (PRI) which completely dominates the government, the trade unions, and the national peasants' organization. As head of the big TVA-like project which centers on the Balsas River and reaches into eight states, Cárdenas holds one of the most important positions in the Mexican government. At the same time, as the inspirer and spiritual leader of the newly formed National Liberation Movement, he is the central figure in the only opposition which is potentially capable of transforming and revivifying Mexican political life. He is able to play this dual role only because of his commanding prestige in the country at large, and especially among the peasants. One of the great actors in the historical drama of the Mexican Revolution, Lázaro Cárdenas may yet hold in his hands the keys to his country's future.

As an interested observer of Mexican affairs for more than a quarter of a century, I have long been an admirer of General Cárdenas and hoped some day to have the honor of meeting

him in person. When I was invited last summer to deliver three lectures at the School of Economics of the National University, it seemed that the opportunity might be at hand, but the General spends much of his time outside the capital and it proved impossible to find a date when he was both available and free. Invited again by the School of Economics to come to Mexico, this time to serve as a member of the examining board of a candidate for the degree of Licenciado (roughly comparable to our Ph.D.), I traveled to Mexico City late in April. General Cárdenas was in the capital and readily agreed to my request for an interview, which took place on April 25th in the office of his house in Lomas de Chapultepec on the outskirts of Mexico City. I was accompanied by Alonso Aguilar of the faculty of the School of Economics who studied in New York at Columbia during the 1940's and is now a member of the six-man directing committee of the Movement of National Liberation. Señor Aguilar acted as interpreter.

I of course knew of General Cárdenas's role in Mexican history and was aware of his pre-eminence in the eyes of his countrymen. I soon discovered, however, that I was very far from appreciating his full stature. It is a fair generalization, I suppose, that most people stop developing at a relatively early age. And men or women who reach a peak of achievement while they are still young and vigorous are quite likely in later life to look back on their lives with nostalgia, finding anticlimax in everything that has occurred since their days of glory. For these and related reasons, one expects a man in General Cárdenas's position to be more oriented to the past than to the present or the future; one expects his reminiscences to be more interesting than his prognoses. Coming to the interview with preconceptions of this kind, I was unprepared to discover the real Lázaro Cárdenas of 1962. And as I sat, fascinated, listening to him discuss the great issues of the day, especially as they affect his country and mine, I came gradually to the realization that I was in the presence of one of the really great figures of American history—a man who one day will surely be ranked with Bolívar and Washington, with Juárez and Lincoln, with Fidel Castro and Franklin D. Roosevelt in the pantheon of the Americas.

Lomas de Chapultepec is a relatively new residential area where much building is in evidence; the houses, at least from the outside, are not unlike what one might see in an upper-class section of San Francisco or Los Angeles. General Cárdenas's house is one of these, outwardly much like its neighbors. There were a number of people outside and in the courtyard, evidently a part of the General's official establishment, but the atmosphere was quiet and unhurried. The office into which we were shown on arrival is well appointed and in excellent taste. General Cárdenas entered through a door that opens on a garden. At no time during the nearly two hours we were with him was one conscious that he is a busy man with many and varied responsibilities. No telephone rang, no secretary entered.

General Cárdenas, of heavy set and medium height, looks for all the world as though he had just stepped out of one of Rivera's murals depicting the panorama of Mexico's turbulent history. He speaks in a low voice without rhetorical mannerisms. His expression is mostly quiet and attentive, even immobile; but when he talks, an elusive smile lights up his olive-green eyes. Though he doesn't look at all like him, I was somehow reminded of Einstein. The modesty and deep humanity of the man are, as it were, a part of his appearance, and I suppose that this is what makes him look like Einstein after all.

I had indicated in advance that I would especially like to get his views on the Alliance for Progress, and he quickly expressed his agreement. But first he wanted to talk about Cuba, partly perhaps because, having read Leo Huberman's and my book *Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution*, he knew of my great interest in the subject, but even more, I suspect, because he wanted to express to whatever audience he might reach through this interview his complete and unreserved solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and its leaders. There was no trace of holding back, of diplomatic circumlocution. The Cuban Revolution was right and good because it was undertaking essential social transformations, because it enjoyed the wholehearted support of the popular masses, and because its leaders were honest and dedicated men. I asked him whether Fidel's December declaration of adherence to Marxism-Leninism had given him any feelings of doubt or foreboding. Not at all, he said. Fidel had come

to this position through experience, and in saying so openly before the world he was strengthening, not weakening, the Cuban Revolution.

I did not wish to question General Cárdenas about his personal political views, but I received the strong impression that experience had led him to essentially the same position as Fidel's. It is surely food for thought—especially, one would hope, in Washington—that the two greatest statesmen of contemporary Latin America, men who were brought up entirely within the confines of the Western democratic tradition and fought to the utmost to realize its ideals in practice—that such men have been led by their own full and often bitter experience to adopt the world outlook of revolutionary Marxism. Could there be more eloquent testimony, I thought as I listened to him speak, to the truth and universality of Marxism in the 20th century?

I asked General Cárdenas if he thought any Latin American government would dare to support openly a new U.S. attempt to overthrow Castro by armed force. He replied that there were undoubtedly several that would like to but that if they did they would not only face the overwhelming opposition of their own people but would probably find themselves threatened from neighboring countries as well. Many people from all over Latin America, he said, would sacrifice their lives in defense of Cuba even if military defeat were absolutely certain. Statements like this reflect the fact that in relation to the great issues of our time, the boundaries between Latin American countries mean very little. All Latin Americans, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary alike, feel that what happens in Cuba concerns them almost as much as it does the Cubans. As the title of a book just published in Mexico puts it, *Cuba no es una isla*.

Next we turned to the Alliance for Progress. General Cárdenas began by saying that it was quite possible that President Kennedy and others in the U.S. government are sincere in what they say about the Alliance for Progress. That is not the point. The words sound very good; the trouble is that they do not agree with the facts. There has been no progress, and nothing is being done or planned that can bring any progress. These are the facts: they are known to everyone in Latin

America. The conservatives who support the Alliance for Progress do so because it means loans from the United States. They know, and everyone else knows, that the loans come with strings attached, that their purpose is to reinforce the existing social structure, not to create the conditions necessary for progress.

I asked him whether this contradiction between words and facts, so obvious to everyone, doesn't generate enormous cynicism; whether the blatant lack of correspondence between what is said and what is done doesn't lead to distrust of words in general. He agreed that this is indeed the case. The peoples of Latin America, he said, observe that the views and attitudes of the United States agree fully with those of their own conservatives, and they know from long experience that the latter are the enemies of progress. How can they help concluding that the U.S. is also the enemy of progress? Was he not saying, I asked, that the name should be changed to the "Alliance against Progress"? He nodded assent.

There is in operation, he went on, a vicious circle. The governments of Latin America for the most part do not have the confidence of their own peoples and are not even trusted by the U.S. It follows that loans to them must be accompanied by close supervision. And this in turn offends the dignity and honor of the people who become all the more alienated from and hostile to their governments.

At this point I asked General Cárdenas if he thought it was possible for the United States to change its policies in such a way as to bring real assistance to the countries of Latin America. I mentioned the extent to which U.S. manpower is unemployed and productive capacity idle, estimating that if a real effort were made production could easily be doubled in a short time. I said that the situation seemed to many of us in the United States a disgrace at a time when so many of the people of the world are so poor and hungry. Did he think that there was any possibility that a relationship with Latin America (and other underdeveloped areas) could be worked out that would permit at least some of this unused productive power to serve the needs of the underprivileged?

It is easy to answer such a question with glib generalities

about the need for a change of heart in Washington. Present disastrous trends can be attributed to faulty knowledge or neglect, and the leadership of the U.S. can be exhorted to mend its ways. We hear such diagnoses and prescription from our own liberals every day of the week. But an answer of this kind apparently never even occurred to General Cárdenas. Rhetorical eloquence and paper schemes for reforming the world are simply not in his line. He is interested in knowing the truth and facing up to it. Instead of spinning fantasies about what the U.S. might conceivably do, he began by emphasizing what it actually is doing. It is playing a negative role, not assisting development but putting a brake on development. And the reason is not the bad will or evil intent of U.S. policy-makers but the structure of U.S. society. Those who govern an imperialist country, he was saying in effect, will act like imperialists, and it is vain to expect them to do otherwise.

This does not mean that General Cárdenas is at all inclined to a fatalistic acceptance of the present pattern of relations between the United States and Latin America. Like almost everyone else in Latin America, he expressed bitterness at the low and in many cases declining prices which Latin America receives for its exports.* He deplored the lack of understanding between people north and south of the border. Many people in the U.S., he said, seem to think that all Mexicans are lazy. They ought to know better. Don't many thousands of Mexicans go to the States every year to work on farms and doesn't everyone know that they work very hard indeed? If North Americans understood Latin America better, they would certainly bring pressure on their government to adopt more sensible policies. But he had no high expectations along this line. About the most

* On April 24th, the day before our interview, the *New York Times* carried a story on the annual meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank in Buenos Aires, which said in part: "Finance Minister Jorge Mejia Palacio of Colombia said his country had lost two to three times as much foreign income from falling coffee prices as it had received in Alliance for Progress credits. He said the main thing the Alliance could accomplish would be a long-term world coffee pact. 'Until this comes about,' Senor Mejia asserted, 'the help that is given us, however generous it may be, will not be blood to vitalize our economies, as was planned, but simply tranquilizers to avoid a total collapse.'" Needless to say, the Foreign Minister of Colombia is hardly a flaming radical.

one could hope for would be that politically the U.S. would leave Latin America alone, and economically the two areas would trade more or less normally. Assistance without strings attached would be fine, but it was unlikely.

I asked General Cárdenas whether he thought that, if the United States would leave Latin America alone, revolution by peaceful, democratic means might be possible in some countries. His answer was prompt and emphatic: "No doubt about it." Keeping the present oligarchies in power cannot and will not maintain order; quite to the contrary, it will promote disorder and bloodshed. It would be vastly better if the United States would leave Latin America alone to follow its own course: without U.S. support, the position of the oligarchies would be hopeless and they would be forced to give way before popular pressures. Instead, the U.S. follows exactly the opposite course—organizing police repression, sending in money to spread corruption, building up bogeys to scare and divide people, employing the CIA to undermine and overthrow democratic movements and governments. And all of this, General Cárdenas remarked sadly, is not even in the interests of the United States: in the long run, the United States has far more to gain from decent governments and peaceful social reform in Latin America than from bloody revolutions and civil wars.

I raised the question whether ruling classes in decline could ever be expected to understand their real interests, and this led into a discussion of the general outlook for the world as a whole. Here, as elsewhere, I found that General Cárdenas had very clear and firmly held views. He expects that the Soviet Union and China (he always spoke of them together) will outstrip the United States in economic development in the years ahead, and that the underdeveloped countries will follow in their footsteps, simply because there is no other way to solve their problems. Already, the military strength of the socialist countries is so great that the United States could not possibly launch and win a war against them. For this reason, he does not believe that there will be a war. He thinks that some agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union (and China) is likely, and he hopes that a similar agreement between the United States and Latin America will eventually be possible. If only the United

THE FOOD SITUATION IN CUBA

States—and here I got the impression that he was thinking of the people rather than the government—would see its own interests! Because he hopes for this agreement so fervently, and because he puts more trust in peoples than in rulers, he feels that it is most important that there should be more and ever more understanding of Latin America in the United States.

I asked whether he didn't think it possible that the ruling class in the United States would refuse to accept eclipse, that sooner or later it would blow up the world rather than allow it to develop along the lines he had sketched. He didn't pretend to know. "You know your own magnates better than I do," he said. But I gathered that he didn't really believe in such a possibility. He understands the character of the age we live in with an astonishing clarity and sureness; he knows its seemingly insuperable problems, its incalculable dangers. But his commitment to humanity and his love of life are much too deep to allow him to believe in ultimate, absolute catastrophe. "In spite of all," he said, "we must be optimistic about the future."

With these words the interview came to an end. Whenever I feel discouraged by defeats or overwhelmed by the onrush of events, as surely we all must from time to time, I am going to remember them. And I am going to remember the quiet and gentle, but above all strong, man who uttered them. He is one of the great Americans of our time; his example can and should be an inspiration for all Americans whether they happen to live north or south of the Rio Grande.

THE FOOD SITUATION IN CUBA

BY MARJORIE K. MORRAY

The following is a copy of a letter addressed to the Editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Marjorie Morray has been in Havana with her husband Joseph P. Morray whose works, including MR Press book *From Yalta to Disarmament*, are well known to MR readers. A teacher by

profession, Mrs. Morray has been working for the Cuban Ministry of Education on its program for training teachers of English.—The Editors

I was both disappointed and distressed when I read the recent article on Cuba which appeared on the front page of the *Chronicle* (March 27). As a subscriber to your paper during our years in the Bay Area, I have appreciated the constructive point of view you have taken on questions such as the teacher hearings carried on by the House Un-American Activities Committee. For that reason the grossly untrue headline proclaiming that Cuba is near starvation and economic collapse came as a double shock. Gerald Clark's article, let me assure you and the readers of the *Chronicle*, is full of misrepresentations and downright lies. Let me substantiate my statement.

In the first place, at no time since the triumph of the Revolution in January, 1959, have the people of Cuba been near starvation. During the last year, because of a severe and prolonged drought and the economic blockade imposed by the United States, food has not been as plentiful to the city-dwellers, particularly those of average and better-than-average economic means, as it was before. Despite the shortages, the poor farmers and working people have been eating as they never could eat before the Revolution. Up until one month ago food distribution was not planned in such a way that equal amounts were available to everyone. Families in which both parents worked suffered particularly because there was no one to stand in the waiting lines for food. Now, however, that problem has been solved—and to the immense satisfaction of the majority of the people—by the rationing system. Supplies are not plentiful, but everyone has quite enough to live and eat adequately. Each person has a right to three-quarters of a pound of meat, one-quarter of a pound of fish, 1.4 liters of milk, an egg, one and one-half pounds of rice and three and one-half pounds of potatoes or sweet potatoes per week. In addition, he receives one-eighth of a pound of butter, two pounds of oil or cooking fat, one two-pound chicken, a bar of toilet soap, a bar of laundry soap, and one small box of detergent each month. Cheese is available in limited quantities as is yogourt. Salami, luncheon meats, and canned meats are also distributed at intervals. To the citizen of the United States this does not represent

an acceptable diet, but it does not add up to starvation, and I would like to know how many of our brothers in the "free countries" of Latin America can count on regular consumption of this quantity of nourishing food. As a visitor in England in 1948, I remember clearly how much worse the food situation was there at that time than it is here now. Fresh fruits and vegetables are plentiful in the city markets, and they are not rationed. Mr. Clark's statement that city people are reduced to a diet of malanga occasioned a good laugh to all of us here, since malanga, a very popular food that resembles the potato, is the one item that we have not been able to buy recently. But we have had more than adequate supplies of carrots, lettuce, Swiss chard, spinach, cucumbers, tomatoes, beets, radishes, green beans (recently), grapefruit, and oranges. During a short period of perhaps two weeks the last two items were in short supply, but they are once again available in every fruit stand. Mangoes and pineapple are now to be found in stands throughout the city, so that the fruit salad we eat every evening for supper is full of flavor and vitamins.

What is as important as anything mentioned above is the rise in morale. The waiting lines or "colas" are disappearing. People are confident that their government will fulfill its promises to them. I find the women with whom I work happier and more content. The only Cubans who intone the phrase "hambre—much hambre" (hunger—great hunger) are the counter-revolutionaries, whose principal aim in life these days is to create dissatisfaction and anxiety.

It is not an easy task for people like the Cubans, who for years have lived under foreign domination, to solve the problems with which they are faced. Lack of organization is painfully apparent in many aspects of everyday work and living. But the leaders of the Revolution have not been afraid to face all problems, confront their mistakes and deficiencies, and work toward solutions. They have behaved with admirable courage and decision, and for this reason they have the affection and trust of their people.

I hope that future articles about Cuba that appear in the *Chronicle* will be written with a greater sense of responsibility and a greater respect for the truth.

IDLE MACHINES

BY AN ECONOMIC OBSERVER

As we go to press, word comes (*Business Week*, May 12, p. 50) that the Joint Economic Committee is about to open public hearings on the subject of measuring the productive capacity of U. S. industries. As readers of MR know, we have long insisted that this is one of the most important and at the same time most neglected areas of economics. We welcome the hearings, which will be conducted under the chairmanship of Senator Proxmire, and commend to the attention of the Committee's members and staff the following article which was written by a professional economist-statistician who shares our view of the importance of the capacity problem and has devoted much study to it over a period of years.—The Editors

Whatever happens in a given society can be judged by two quite different sets of standards: by standards of reason (reason not being absolute, of course, but relative to the state of knowledge and civilization at any given time), and by the standards of the society itself (which comes to the same as saying by the standards which the leaders and beneficiaries of the society set up as being in their own best interests).

As an example, take the distribution of income in the United States today. Judged by standards of reason, the extreme inequality which exists between rich and poor is irrational and evil. Judged by the standards of capitalism, on the other hand, it is one of the system's best features. If, however, the inequality were to become so aggravated as to jeopardize the stability of the system (stirring up unrest, causing threats of revolution, etc.), then it would have to be judged irrational and bad from the standpoint of the capitalists too, though the indicated correction would of course be very different from the indicated correction considered from the standpoint of reason.

Similar considerations apply to the rate of utilization of productive capacity. By capitalist standards, it is desirable that there should normally be a considerable amount of idle productive capacity in existence. For example, the fact that the

automobile industry reaches an annual rate of output of 12 million cars for two months of the year, only to sink back to an average rate of 4 million cars over the remaining 10 months, tells us nothing about *excess* capacity in the industry: it tells us only that in an industry with annual model changes and a violent seasonal fluctuation in demand, a large amount of capacity must lie partly or wholly unused most of the time. If demand falls so that output in the peak months is, say, at the rate of 10 million a year, it might seem that we could then say that the industry had excess capacity capable of producing 2 million cars a year. But from the capitalist point of view even this is not necessarily the case. Production is subject not only to seasonal but also to cyclical fluctuations, and every producer must have more than enough capacity to produce his average output over a period of years as well as during a given year. This "more than enough" will be idle most of the time, but it is not excess from the producer's point of view. There are also other reasons for maintaining idle capacity, perhaps the chief of which is the desire to be in a position to take business away from a competitor if the opportunity presents itself (or can be created, as for example by a new advertising campaign). All in all, it is clear that a capitalist system, even when it is functioning well, must on the average be characterized by the existence of a large amount of unused productive capacity. The extent to which in practice even more than this amount of idle capacity exists—capacity which must be classified as excess even from the capitalist standpoint—will be considered presently.

Judged by standards of reason, of course, most of this "normal" unused capacity must be considered sheer waste. Some seasonal fluctuations in production, due to changes in the weather, are doubtless unavoidable, but the extremes which owe their existence to particular marketing patterns and fashion changes can obviously and advantageously be eliminated. Similarly, in a rational society business cycles would not exist (the socialist countries have already proved it), and capacity duplication by competitors fighting for a limited market would have no place in a rational economic plan. A rational society, in short, would normally utilize productive capacity continuously and at rates determined not by the vagaries of an unplanned

market but by the technological characteristics of the capital equipment itself.

With so much by way of introduction, let us turn to the question of measurement of capacity and its utilization in the economy of the United States. The first systematic attempt in this direction was made by the Brookings Institution and related to the situation which existed during the last years of the boom of the 1920's.* Actual publication, however, did not take place until the middle of the Great Depression by which time the existence of "idle men and idle machines" was so overwhelmingly obvious that no efforts at measurement seemed called for. Moreover, the economics profession did not take at all kindly to the pioneering work of the Brookings people. A highly critical review by Arthur F. Burns, later to become the head of the National Bureau of Economic Research and chief of the Council of Economic Advisers under Eisenhower, took the authors of *America's Capacity to Produce* severely to task for even trying to measure capacity,** after which the whole problem dropped from view. Apart from the Brookings study, there was no important work on the subject prior to World War II.

During the war and the immediate postwar years, high rates of utilization of both capital equipment and manpower were the rule; and when this situation seemed about to change, the Korean War came along and once again gave the economy a powerful shot in the arm. It was only after 1953 that the problem of "idle men and idle machines" once again moved to the center of the stage. So serious has it become since then that economists and statisticians are no longer able to ignore it. The last few years have witnessed a revival of interest and the most important work in the field since the Brookings study. Let us have a look at some of this work.

At a recent New York conference on the subject of "The Measurement of Capacity," sponsored by the American Statistical Association, the following ratios of manufacturing output to capacity were presented (top of next page):

* Harold G. Moulton and associates, *America's Capacity to Produce*, Washington, 1934.

** Reprinted in A. F. Burns, *Frontiers of Economic Knowledge*, New York, 1954.

IDLE MACHINES

	<i>4th Quarter, Seasonally Adjusted</i>		
	1953	1957	1960
McGraw-Hill	.88	.76	.73
Federal Reserve Board	.84	.79	.70

These figures tell us that in 1960 about 30 percent of available capacity was not used, while in 1953 the corresponding percentage was between 12 and 16.

Of these two sets of measurements, the McGraw-Hill is more comprehensive in its coverage and the FRB is more precise. Each therefore acts as a sort of check on the other, and their close agreement in terms of the direction of movement and the order of magnitude of the changes gives us confidence in their reliability.

In the McGraw-Hill survey, a cross section of industrial enterprises (mainly large ones) is asked to give their own estimates of their capacity and to furnish data on their output. Each company is left to make its own common-sense assumptions about what is to be considered the normal number of daily shifts of operation, normal seasonal variation, normal requirements for stand-by equipment, and so on. No doubt these assumptions vary considerably from company to company, so that it is difficult to assign a precise meaning to the overall rates for industry as a whole; but since each company probably makes the same assumptions on different survey dates, the indicated changes in the utilization of capacity are likely to be reasonably accurate.

The FRB index covers a much narrower segment of industry than McGraw-Hill, being confined to 19 major materials (steel, oil, paper, etc.). In these branches of industry, however, the rated capacities of equipment are generally well known to engineers, and output can for the most part be measured in standard physical units. Both capacity and production can therefore be assumed to be objectively determinable to a much greater extent than is true in the McGraw-Hill surveys.

Given these differences in coverage and method, it is a remarkable fact that both indexes show a decline of between 17 and 18 percent in the ratio of output to capacity from 1953 to 1960. This decline is certainly not a cyclical pheno-

menon. The 4th quarter of 1953 and the 4th quarter of 1960, to which the figures relate, were in approximately the same phase of the business cycle (in the downswing, roughly midway between peak and trough), so that on cyclical grounds alone one would expect no significant change in the utilization rate. Nor is it possible to assume that we have to do here with a volume of unused capacity which is to be regarded as necessary for the normal functioning of capitalism. It might be argued—whether rightly or wrongly need not concern us—that this was indeed the case in 1953: in other words, that from the capitalist standpoint a utilization rate of between 84 and 88 percent is to be equated with full capacity operation. But the same argument could not possibly hold for 1960 when the utilization rate was as low as 70 to 73 percent. Evidently, there are forces at work which tend to generate productive capacity which is excessive even from the narrowest capitalist standpoint.

How long have these forces been in operation? And what sort of utilization rates do they produce if we judge not by the standards of capitalism but rather by the standards of reason? An attempt can be made to answer these questions simultaneously if we can find a base year in which productive capacity was really fully utilized in the technological sense of the word “fully,” and if we can then construct indexes of capacity and output running backwards and forwards from this base year.

Fortunately, there is one year in U.S. economic history which meets our requirements. This is the year 1943 when, under the hammer of war and necessity, the nation's industrial output rose to double the 1940 figure and reached a peak which, after the return of peace, was not to be equalled again until 1953. The 1943 performance was achieved despite the mobilization of 11 million men in the most productive age groups in the armed forces, and without any extensive additions to capital equipment. Since the decade preceding the war was characterized by the lowest relative rate of capital formation in our history, we can be pretty certain that the production of 1943 represented the fullest possible use of existing plant and equipment.

How much of an increase in capacity took place between 1943 and 1953? According to a recent study by the Joint Economic Committee (*Variability of Private Investment in*

Plant and Equipment, Part 1), the real net value (in 1954 prices) of all structures and equipment in American manufacturing was \$53.7 billion in 1943. During the next decade, total capital expenditures of American manufacturers amounted to approximately \$78 billion (also in 1954 prices), far more than the net value of the capital stock in 1943. However, the bulk of this huge investment (\$51 billion) was financed from "depreciation" reserves and was therefore presumed not to add to capital equipment but simply to replace what had worn out or become obsolete. Subtracting this \$51 billion from the \$78-billion total leaves a bit less than \$27 billion as "net capital formation," i.e. the amount of the increase of the capital stock in the decade. Adding this to the stock on hand in 1943, the Joint Committee estimated the real net value of structures and equipment in 1953 at \$80.6 billion. In other words, the real value of the stock of capital in manufacturing rose by 50 percent in this decade, or at an average rate of 5 percent a year.

This, however, is certainly a serious underestimate of the resulting increase in actual productive capacity. To begin with, as everyone familiar with business practice knows, much of the plant and equipment in use today has long ago been fully depreciated and "written off." This means that in fact much of the investment financed from depreciation funds and ostensibly intended to replace worn out capital in fact adds to the productive capacity on hand.*

A second, and probably even more important, reason why the 50 percent figure for increase in capital stock underestimates the expansion of capacity is that it makes no allowance for the rising efficiency of each dollar's worth of capital due to advancing technology. Not only the net additions to capital

* Needless to say, this practice has the effect of concealing the true profitability of American industry (since that part of depreciation which adds to capital nevertheless appears on the books as a cost and not as a profit). A neglected T.N.E.C. report entitled *Profits, Productive Activities and New Investment* (Monograph No. 12, p. 14) presented the startling statistic that in the period 1909-1937 American corporations reported only \$9 billion of retained profits after dividend payments, but that in the same period their net worth had risen by \$94 billion, of which only \$28 billion could be accounted for by new stock issues. The remaining \$66-billion gain in net worth reflects increases in earning power in which the investment of excessive depreciation charges must have played a big part.

benefit from technological progress; in addition whenever equipment wears out and is replaced, the replacement always embodies the latest available technology. Let us try to give quantitative expression to the increasing efficiency of capital in the following manner: The National Bureau of Economic Research estimates that for the private domestic economy in the period 1919-1953, output per unit of capital and labor rose by 2.6 percent per annum.* This measure reflects improved labor and management skills, shifts in production from less to more productive sectors, and the greater efficiency of capital. In point of fact, however, it is clearly the last of these three factors which is the most important. We will therefore assume an average annual gain of 1.5 percent in capital efficiency, which is well on the conservative side.

We now have all the factors necessary to calculate an index of manufacturing capacity, using 1943 as the base year.** Since quantity of capital went up by 50 percent, and efficiency by 16 percent (1.5 percent compounded over a 10-year period), it follows that the index ($1943=100$) rose to 174 in 1953. Manufacturing output in the same period, as measured by the Federal Reserve index, rose by only 6 percent. Thus the capacity utilization rate for 1953 can be calculated as .61 (106 divided by 174), instead of the .84 or .88 figures cited in the table on page 87 above.

Using the same methods, we can bring these figures up to 1960. We find that capacity had by then risen to 230, while production had gone up only to 121 (with 1943 as the base year). This yields a utilization rate of .53. *Nota bene* that the drop in utilization between 1953 and 1960 is only 13 percent, substantially less than the 17 to 18 percent drop shown by the McGraw-Hill and FRB data. Allowing for a continuation of these trends since 1960—and there is no reason to doubt that they have continued—we can say with considerable confidence that *American industry has enough idle capacity today to permit*

* J. W. Kendrick, *Productivity Trends in the United States*, New York, 1961, p. 70.

** Since no attempt has been made to allow for net capital formation resulting from the investment of excessive depreciation funds, the increase shown after 1943 must be considered to be a rock-bottom minimum rather than the actual amount.

an almost instantaneous doubling of manufacturing output.

A recent study by Donald Streever (*Capacity Utilization and Business Investment*, University of Illinois, 1960), which uses methods similar to those described in the last few paragraphs, enables us to carry these estimates back to 1920. Shifting Streever's indexes over to a 1943 base, and using the figures developed above for 1953 and 1960, we get the following table:

Indexes of Capacity, Output, and Utilization
(American Manufacturing, 1943=100)

	<i>Capacity</i>	<i>Output</i>	<i>Utilization</i>
1920	33	32	97
1929	60	46	77
1943	100	100	100
1953	174	106	61
1960	230	121	53

It is worth noting that the utilization rate for 1929 in this table checks reasonably closely with the estimate made in the Brookings study cited above, which found that in the late 20's the degree of utilization of capacity in 29 manufacturing industries averaged 83 percent, a fact which lends further credibility to our estimating procedures.

What is most striking about this table, of course, is the dramatic evidence it provides of a long-term decline in the rate of utilization of productive capacity.* What is the significance of this? How can it be explained? It is hoped that the following remarks, which naturally do not pretend to be full answers to these questions, may stimulate further thought and study in this important but neglected area of economics and statistics.

In the first place, the low and declining utilization of capacity which characterizes the U.S. economy goes far towards explaining how it happens that the socialist countries manage to achieve industrial growth rates two and three times greater than ours. They are applying the same technology, derived from

* Academic economists will no doubt emit cries of protest against using 1943 as the base year of 100 percent capacity utilization. From a capitalist point of view, the objection is undoubtedly justified: as pointed out above, in normal times capitalism *needs* a considerable amount of idle capacity. But this in no way affects the *trend* displayed in the table, which would be the same even if some other year were chosen as base.

the same scientific principles, but they continuously operate their productive plant at levels the U.S. economy has attained only in war years, when it too could be freed from the restrictions of the "market."*

Second, the declining utilization rate helps to throw light on another important statistical finding recently offered by Simon Kuznets, namely, that net capital formation which 80 years ago accounted for 15 percent of American output now accounts for only 7 percent.** In this and other studies by the National Bureau of Economic Research, it is shown that after 1919 a profound alteration occurred in the volume and character of capital formation in the United States. With respect to volume, in the period 1880-1900 total capital assets in manufacturing and mining rose at the fantastic rate of 92.7 percent per decade; from 1900 to the mid-20's, the rate of increase fell to 61 percent per decade; and from 1924 to 1953, the gain was down to 17.8 percent per decade. Furthermore, while prior to 1919 capital innovations tended to be labor saving, after 1919 they were increasingly capital saving, i.e., designed to raise the efficiency of each unit of capital. In the later period, there was less emphasis on plant construction, railroad trackage, etc., and more on replacement of producer durable goods at ever higher technical levels. Before 1919, it would seem, when both gross and net capital formation were very high, output grew fast enough to keep the problem of excess capacity from being more than a transient or at most a cyclical phenomenon. But after 1919, the rate of capital formation slackened, and this coincided with the emergence of growing excess capacity as a secular phenomenon.

Why? The Austrian economist J. Steindl, in an extremely interesting and much neglected work, has offered a convincing

* The *New York Times* of May 9th carried a report from Moscow by Theodore Shabad on a speech by the Soviet Minister of Railways, which noted among other things that "Although the mileage of the Soviet rail system is only about one third that of the United States, the Russians make intensive use of their lines, moving almost twice as much freight [by rail] as the United States." This would imply that at least as far as trackage is concerned the rate of utilization of capacity by U. S. railroads is approximately 17 percent!

** Simon Kuznets, *Capital in the American Economy*, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1962, p. 396.

explanation in terms of the growth of oligopoly and monopoly in the American economy. Translating his theory into Marxist terminology, Steindl sums it up succinctly as follows:

As a consequence of the rise of oligopoly, the *rate of surplus value* tends to increase: the rate of exploitation rises. But as Marx explained, producing surplus value does not necessarily mean realizing it, and the realization depends on the existence of a sufficient market. We should now say that surplus value can be realized only to the extent to which there is a corresponding amount of investment and capitalists' consumption. If this amount does not increase, then the rise in the rate of surplus value *produced* will not lead to any increase in surplus value realized, but only to excess capacity. . . . The excess capacity remaining, it exerts then a depressing influence on the investment decisions of capitalists and the rate of growth of capital slows down.*

If we ask the question, why the retardation in the rate of *investment* since 1919 has not more seriously reduced the rate of growth of *capacity*, the answer would seem to be in large part that the pressure to cut costs has resulted in technological advances of a kind to make every dollar invested in equipment today far more productive than a dollar invested in the past. Also, as we have argued above, depreciation charges are becoming an increasingly important source of *additions* to capacity. If the long decline in net investment noted by Kuznets should continue and reach, say by 1970, the zero point (as in the 30's), spending of depreciation funds on new advanced equipment would still play an important part in expanding capacity.

In our economy, the truly awesome potential of modern technology remains to a large extent a latent force. The mere existence of this slumbering giant, however, explains some of the huge wastes to which the American free enterprise system is dedicated. The underutilization of productive forces revealed in our measurements of capacity and output, as well as in the rising unemployment rates of the last five years, would of course have been far worse but for the expenditure of tens of billions of dollars every year on armaments. It is this unused potential which underlies the lunatic logic of the Rand thermo-

* J. Steindl, *Maturity and Stagnation in American Capitalism*, Oxford, 1952, p. 245.

nuclear warriors, who regard the expenditure of \$500 billion more to rebuild our entire industrial capacity underground as a more realistic endeavor than assuming the costs of disarmament. The sad truth is that in one sense we can "afford" this madness. Thus the Joint Economic Committee values the entire industrial plant of 1960 at \$96.1 billion (1954 prices), which could be reproduced with merely two years of defense expenditures at the current level! Or to take another statistic, Kuznets evaluates the reproducible wealth of the entire society at \$419 billion, less than one year's gross national product.

This enormous productivity of capital and its capacity to reproduce itself quickly was clearly seen by Veblen, who predicted the speedy resurgence of Germany on the basis of a rebuilt industrial complex after World War I. And of course, the same logic applies to what has been happening since the end of World War II. Given the task of producing for war, or of repairing the ravages of war, modern capitalist economy can display great vitality, for it can then attain a full and uninhibited utilization of capacity. This is the basic reason for the high growth rates generated by the Common Market countries during the past decade. But whether these growth rates will continue indefinitely into the future is another question. It may be significant that West German output has risen very little over the past year (written in April 1962); but whether this be a temporary lull or not, West Germany, now the darling of the capitalist world, will sooner or later meet its real test. Since the extent of monopolization in the European economy rivals that of the United States, it is reasonable to expect that the specter of excess capacity will emerge there too, to inhibit further capital investment and encourage the wastes of an irrational economic system.

One final observation: The problem of American overcapacity can be seen in proper perspective by taking a global and long-term historical view. The American capitalist economic structure is the product and chief beneficiary of several centuries of uneven development, in which the resources of the underdeveloped world were exploited, drained, and stunted. For example, Basil Davidson has recently estimated that in the period 1600-1850, 50 million Africans were sent to the New World

in a triangular slave trade that added enormously to the wealth of Europe and America and left a bitter legacy of destruction and social dissolution in what had been flourishing African states. Others, notably Paul Baran, have detailed the contributions of Asia and Latin America to the wealth of the capitalist nations.

Now, in the second half of the 20th century, it is one of the ironies of history that the enormous capital needs of the underdeveloped countries offer the only possible market commensurate with the untapped potential of the American economy, of which excess capacity is only one aspect. If capitalism were a rational system, the magnetic attraction of these enormously powerful opposites would find full expression, for it will probably be at least another decade or two before the advancing socialist nations will have developed the industrial capacity to undertake the task on the necessary scale. If our country nevertheless sits back, like the proverbial dog in the manger, ignoring the dictates of reason, justice, and history, we will certainly have earned the bitter hatred of other peoples for dissipating a scientific and technological legacy that rightly belongs to the whole world.

Abundance might be defined as the capacity—here meaning resources, skill, capital, and potential and present production—the capacity to supply every citizen with a minimum decent life. We have the capacity, so this makes us an abundant society. Yet some 30 million Americans are living below the poverty line.

—W. H. Ferry, *The Dilemmas of Abundance*, 1961

The inescapable fact is that the overwhelming, indeed the almost exclusive, emphasis of the Kennedy Administration has been military. From the election campaign, from its earliest days in office when it engaged in military pump-priming of the economy down to the recent call-up of Reserve and National Guard divisions, its deeds have gone in one direction, and only a small quota of its words in the other. Some of those words have indicated a fuller intellectual conception of what is involved in good intentions, but the emphasis of the deeds, by which alone Russia and the world will judge us, has been almost exclusively devoted to the welding of an ever mightier military force.

—Fred J. Cook, "Juggernaut," *The Nation*, October 28, 1961

THE PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC PROPERTY

BY JULIUS EMSPAK

Less than a week before his unexpected death, at the age of 57, of a heart attack on April 26, 1962, Julius Emspak sent us the manuscript of the following article. It is, we think, a fitting tribute to one of the ablest and most devoted labor leaders to emerge from the great CIO organizing drives of the New Deal period. A graduate of Union College in Schenectady, Emspak did graduate study in philosophy at Brown before going to work as a tool designer at General Electric's Schenectady plant. He threw himself into the work of organizing GE workers and rose by successive steps to the post of Secretary-Treasurer of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) which he held until his death. In Julius Emspak, the labor and radical movements of the United States have lost one of their finest representatives—The Editors

Until 1942 it was the policy of the United States government and its agencies to retain all patents and proprietary rights resulting from research carried on, at public expense, by private enterprises. In that year, however, the large corporations forced a change. How did they do it?

We get a clue from a report published by the Temporary National Economic Committee in 1941 (TNEC, Monograph No. 26, pp. 172, 173):

Speaking bluntly, the government and the public are "over a barrel" when it comes to dealing with business in time of war or other crisis. Business refuses to work, except on terms which it dictates. It controls the natural resources, the liquid assets, the strategic position in the country's economic structure, and its technical equipment and knowledge of processes.

The experience of the [first] World War, now apparently being repeated, indicates that business will use this control only if it is "paid properly." In effect, this is blackmail, not too fully disguised. . . . It is in such a situation that the question arises: What price patriotism?

Big Business evidently had an answer to the question: its price for urgently-needed conversion to war production was a change in the policy that had been pursued since the country was founded—after 1942, private contractors were permitted

to retain patents on any discovery resulting from their research performed at public expense. That's the situation today: private contractors, engaged in research work on a cost-plus basis for the government, retain title to whatever they may discover.

Many civilian products are on the shelves today as a direct result of military research and development expenditure. The new plastics and adhesives, flame-proof fabrics, heat resistant and fire-retarding paint, and even new automobile power-steering, are just a few of the things given to the corporations at the people's expense.

The United States government finances approximately 65 percent of all research and development performed by private industry. The latest figures easily available (1957) show that 85 percent of all research in aircraft was paid for by the government. In the electrical equipment industry, 61 percent of all research was paid for by the government. In the electronics industry, 50 percent of all research costs have been paid for by the government. As a matter of fact, in the electronics industry about 76 percent of all engineers and scientists employed by the industry are supported by government funds, according to a survey made last year by an industry association in cooperation with the Defense Department.

None of us has escaped corporate propaganda which details the high adventure and great risk of research. Every corporation conveys the impression that it has risked millions upon millions of dollars for the sake of making perhaps one little discovery for the good of mankind. But the facts show something completely different. There is absolutely no risk entailed by corporations so far as their own corporate funds are concerned. On the contrary, a profit is guaranteed. In addition, untold advantages accrue to a company by virtue of the patent monopolies that it gets as a result of the policies pursued by the Defense Department. But even if a company does not patent anything, it gains much in data and methods. In the field of research, data and methods, even without new discoveries, give engineers and scientists a tremendous knowledge and advantage over competitors. It is well known that many corporations prefer *not* to patent discoveries for the sake of having the advantage of a year or two of production before the

item can be copied or imitated. This apparently is worth more in dollars on some items than a patent monopoly.

In addition to cost-plus research and development contracts, the corporations have another gift from the people. A provision of the tax law, enacted in 1954, permits industry to write off money expended on research and development as a current business expense. In practical terms, this means that for the medium and large corporations, about half of the money they might spend for this purpose is provided by this tax benefit. For the large electrical, electronics, and aircraft corporations, anywhere from 80 to 100 percent of the money they claim they spend on research comes out of the pockets of the taxpayers.

The lucrative character of this business was revealed in hearings conducted by Senator Long in 1959. These hearings revealed a number of spectacular examples of the profitability of government contracts. The following is one: In March 1942, the Aerojet-General Corporation was founded. It had a capital investment of \$7,500. At the time that the hearings of the Long Committee took place (December, 1959), the market appraisal of the value of Aerojet-General was over \$300 million. This remarkable achievement in free enterprise stemmed exclusively from cost-plus government research and development contracts. This company, doing business with government, multiplied in value by 40 thousand times in a period of 18 years!

The revelations contained in Long's investigations give more meaning to the interchange of personnel between industry and the Defense establishment, whether it is the placing of officers of the armed services in high positions in industry or whether the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Army, Navy, and Air Force come from industry.

Senator Long reported that the Defense Department stated without hesitation that it had no interest at all in the possible effects of their policies on the public as consumers. Of course, the hearing did not concern itself with wage earners, but it is safe to assume that the Defense Department would have displayed the same lack of interest with reference to the problem of unemployment that is a serious outgrowth of these policies.

The past decade has witnessed massive scientific and technological breakthroughs in the physical sciences. These develop-

ments in science and their technological applications in industry and commerce have sharpened an already acute economic and sociological problem in our society: the problem of unemployment resulting from automation. Thus far, this problem has been buried under meaningless platitudes emanating from government, industry, and the official labor leadership. Yet one plain fact exists, and that is that nearly all the important scientific and technological components related to the building, development, and application of automation equipment were developed in research paid for by the government with the people's money and handed over to the corporations.

In industry, both in the office and in the shop, workers have a legitimate proprietary claim to automation and the fruits of automation. Billions of dollars of the people's money, resulting from cost-plus contracts, have gone to the giant corporations. Automation, new materials and processes, and much knowledge has accrued to private corporations from which they have gained wealth and profit at the expense of jobs for hundreds of thousands of working people. In the last six years, corporations have been granted \$40 billion in cost-plus contracts for research and development, but thus far the people as a whole are deprived of the benefits from these scientific developments due them as owners. Not only are the people deprived of the benefits, but many of them are deprived of jobs as well.

Giant U. S. corporations average a profit rate of 20 percent on their investments. Great monopolies like General Electric, which gain the greatest benefits from automation, make about 40 percent on an investment. The people are entitled to no less. At the most conservative calculations, automation and the new technology should, right now, be returning to the people social benefits amounting to from \$8 to \$16 billion a year on the basis of the peoples' investment alone. The vastness of the people's claim is only highlighted by the fact that the 1961 federal budget schedules no more than about \$5 billion for all social welfare purposes.

What is bought with public money is, by right, public property. But that is not the situation in the United States today. We *do* have a "Welfare State"—but its beneficiaries are the rich and the powerful, not the poor and the needy.

MARXISM AND EXISTENTIALISM—II

BY ADAM SCHAFF

Any comparison between two philosophical trends so different, indeed so clearly opposed, as Marxism and existentialism (that is, the Sartre variety of existentialism which alone plays a certain role in Poland) is bound to begin with an attempt to locate the essential differences between the two. As compared with Marxism, existentialism not only involves a different set of problems, a different vocabulary, or a different world outlook; it also represents a completely different world of thoughts and emotions. If we fail to grasp the central point of the controversy, discussion may prove hopeless.

This central point, round which all other differences of opinion between the Marxists and the existentialists seem to be grouped, is the concept of the individual. For that has been the central issue of all existentialist trends—not ontology or epistemology, but precisely the problem of the human being, the human problem.

The opposition between the existentialist idea and the Marxist, as far as this issue is concerned, can be reduced to the following question: whether, in our analysis of human problems, we should take as our point of departure the “autonomous” individual who chooses his line of conduct in a fully arbitrary manner and thus creates what we call social life; or whether we should rather proceed in the opposite direction, beginning with society which shapes the individual and determines his conduct. Naturally, this is a very general statement of the case, requiring not only additional and more detailed propositions, but also a commentary. But in this resides the essential problem, and everything else—including the question of essence and existence—is only its consequence.

This is the concluding part of an article by a leading Polish philosopher who teaches at the University of Warsaw. It is reprinted by permission from the Warsaw magazine *Polish Perspectives*, No. 3, 1959.

It is advisable to stress that this discrepancy between the starting points of the two trends by no means implies that existentialism uncompromisingly denies the role of society, and Marxism the role of the individual. What we are referring to here is the method of analysis, which, however, is (as is usually the case with problems of method) inseparably linked with the theoretical position.

The common feature of all varieties of existentialism (and they were quite numerous and differed widely in the period between Kierkegaard and Sartre) is not only that their central issue is the destiny and experiences of the individual; they also agree in their treatment of the individual as lonely, isolated, and tragic in his struggle against the irrational forces of the world around him. The issues involved are difficult to grasp and even more difficult to express in a precise way.

Normally this is called subjectivism, and subjectivism it actually is, however strongly the existentialists may protest against this qualification of their position. For only a subjectivist approach can lead to that queer and internally contradictory idea of an individual who is "sovereign" (if we are to believe the assertion that he is completely free and depends on his own decisions alone and at the same time helpless and pathetically hopeless in his struggle against a malicious Fate). But, as I have pointed out, the idea implies an inner contradiction between subjectivism with a voluntarist coloring and an objective treatment of fate which is independent of human actions; and without this the philosophy of despair and senselessness would be deprived of all its charm—so attractive for many of its followers. Incidentally, this is not the only contradiction within existentialism.

The existentialism of Sartre must be treated as a special case, because of both the evolution of his views and the consequent contradictions between the various stages of this evolution.

Sartre's success is due to his exceptionally skillful and artistically attractive presentation of what is the central issue of all existentialism—the problem of the individual and his complex relations with the surrounding world. In this respect his existentialism is fully traditional, not only in the mood of despair and

hopelessness in which his philosophy is thoroughly steeped, but also for a more important reason which determines this mood: his antisocial treatment of the individual who, lonely and isolated, must make decisions concerning his conduct in complete isolation and rely exclusively on himself in his struggle against malicious things, both animate and inanimate—having, in the last resort, no other prospect before him than that of fear and hopelessness. This was by no means a novel idea, but it was particularly impressive in the postwar period of moral confusion, at a time when the traditional system of values was disintegrating and a system of new values was only being born in pain and agony. The whole concept is all the more impressive because—let us say it again—it has been conveyed by a great writer who is also a keen psychologist.

But this is just one Sartre. There is also another who, in contrast with the first, is heading towards socialism in his practical activity and towards Marxism in his theoretical efforts. It is rather amusing that Sartre—an existentialist heading towards Marxism—should have written a special essay (“Marxism and Existentialism,” in *Twórczość*, No. 4, 1957) to tell our Marxists—who are heading towards existentialism and have lost in the process their knowledge of Marxist philosophy and its values—that Marxism is the only living philosophy of our age, the only philosophy with any prospects of development before it. I have said that it is rather amusing, but I might add that it is also fully comprehensible. When two opposing tendencies (away from and towards Marxism) cross at a certain point this is by no means the point of agreement. For there remains something else: the process of their development; and this must not be neglected, for it is responsible for their disagreement. An existentialist who is moving towards Marxism often has a better idea of its significance than a Marxist who is moving towards existentialism.

Between the Sartre who remains loyal to existentialist tradition and the Sartre who accepts the philosophical position of Marxism there is a contradiction that can only be overcome through the repudiation of one of the antagonistic positions now observed in his views. In its most concentrated form this contradiction is noticeable in the treatment of the problem of the individual.

In his famous *Theses on Feuerbach*, the young Marx, whom some of his peculiar "admirers" in Poland are so eager to present as an existentialist, wrote: "... the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is *the ensemble of the social relations*." (Italics added.)

This aphoristic statement was directed against Feuerbach, who, according to Marx, had not grasped the social character of the individual, thus committing a double sin: (a) against the historical determination of the individual, because he treated him in an abstract manner, as an isolated individual; and (b) against his social determination, because he treated him in a naturalist manner, from the viewpoint of the bonds linking the various individuals of the species.

Concluding his criticism of Feuerbach's treatment of the individual (in this particular case Feuerbach was referring to the religious sentiment of man), Marx wrote: "Feuerbach, consequently, does not see that the 'religious sentiment' is itself a *social product*, and that the abstract individual whom he analyzes belongs in reality to a particular form of society."

No particular insight or knowledge is required to observe that these words are directed not only against Feuerbach, but also, and with equal force, against the erroneous views of both naturalism and existentialism in their approach to the problem of the individual.

Marx says that "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations." To understand this is to get to the core of the matter. Man, as a "human individual," is the "ensemble of the social relations," in that his origins and development can only be understood in the social and historical context, that he is a product of social life. This social, and at the same time, historical approach to the study of man's spiritual life and of his products is an incontestable and extremely significant theoretical achievement of Marxism.

This point must be strongly emphasized, not only because it is necessary to oppose the Marxist position to the existentialist approach, but also because we must dissociate ourselves from any simplified interpretation of the young Marx's views. The sudden enthusiasm with which some sections of our intelligentsia

(the phenomenon has, in fact, a much wider, international scope) have turned towards the study of the problems dealt with by Marx in the early period of his activity can be easily explained as a search for an answer to the questions concerning human affairs which these circles have been asking themselves, as an attempt to "humanize" the issues involved in Marxist theory, to imbue them with humane meaning, to relate them to the destinies of the individual. These problems and this inspiration are actually contained in Marx's early works, and to continue to study them against the background of the development of Marx's work is an extremely important and respectable proposition. Such study is by no means related merely to those temporary social needs which have stimulated research into these problems. The point is, however, how these problems are approached and how they are examined and interpreted.

Now, if the same social and psychological reasons which made sections of the intelligentsia, previously associated with Marxism, turn towards existentialism led also to an interpretation of the young Marx's views in a spirit of existentialism, the character of this research must have changed entirely.

But let us get back to the point. It is precisely in the young Marx's views that we find a sharp and uncompromising opposition to the existentialist treatment of the problem of the individual. The acceptance of Marx's position on this issue—which he first expounded in *Theses on Feuerbach* and developed in all his later research—is tantamount to the rejection of the theoretical foundations of existentialism: its subjectivist, anti-social, and anti-historical concept of the individual.

It is therefore impossible, without getting involved in eclecticism or contradictions, to embrace simultaneously the existentialist and the Marxist position on philosophical problems in general and on the problem of the individual in particular. If we approach the problem of the individual from the Marxist viewpoint, i.e., historically and socially, we must reject the idealist (subjectivist) foundations of the existentialist concept, we must reject the proposition that because man must make independent decisions when confronted with a moral conflict (this is true and here lies the actual problem) he is condemned to be alone and, consequently, to despair and hopelessness. On

the contrary, Marxism shows that man, making decisions which are in a sense independent, and choosing a certain attitude or field of activity, always makes these decisions socially—in that his personal models are socially determined, that his foundations are, as Marx once said, a social product and that, from this standpoint, “the individual belongs in fact to a definite form of society.” In this light, the “philosophy of despair,” while actually reflecting the moods prevailing among certain sections of society at a time of crisis, loses its allegedly “eternal” philosophical justification.

It must be expressly pointed out that even atheistic existentialism is much closer to the religious treatment of the problem of man’s destinies and responsibility than it might at first glance appear. This is the price which must inevitably be paid for the repudiation of the historical and social analysis of things human.

As has been already observed, existentialism is characterized by an inner antinomy between the assertion of the “sovereignty” of the individual who is alleged to be the autonomous creator of his fate (this is the gist of the proposition that existence preceded essence) and the meaning of the “philosophy of despair,” proclaiming as it does that man is a plaything in the hands of a blind Fate and that—as Sartre has persuasively emphasized, chiefly in his plays—evil always triumphs, regardless of man’s actions (Sartre’s *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* is probably the sharpest expression of this idea). This antinomy is typical in religious moralizing, particularly that type of moralizing which is derived from the Mosaic religion of which Christianity is a transcription. The Jewish Jehovah is as perverse as the existentialists: it is true that he made man “in his own image and likeness” and gave him (rather cunningly) the knowledge of good and evil, but he did it only to condemn him—the miserable worm, equipped with the Ten Commandments as his only school aids, and groping desperately, in fear and confusion, for a way out of his moral conflicts, with damnation as his only final prospect. How miserable and helpless, how pitiable and contemptible this supreme divine creation appears in the light of religion! And if we also remember that this malicious Demurge is constantly waiting for the downfall of his own creature, whom he had in advance doomed to destruction; if we recall the cruel threat:

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"; if we bear in mind that he carries his vengeance for man's actions on into the tenth generation of formal sinners—we may easily conclude that the Bible makes singularly amoral reading. Yet the existentialists, both of the atheistic and the religious variety, represent in fact the same position and reiterate the cruelty and perversity of the old Jehovah. They also construe the individual as allegedly sovereign, but only to make him lonely, to isolate him from society, to reduce to despair and forlornness those miserable, ridiculous little worms wriggling helplessly under the foot of malicious Fate, with fool's crowns of sovereignty on their heads. Is it not clear that when they cut the individual off from society, far from endowing him with any sovereignty, they are, on the contrary, depriving him of any real independence? Anybody reading Kafka's novels, *The Castle* or *The Trial*, or watching the destinies of Sartre's hero in *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu*, can have no doubts about this. The "philosophy of despair" is moralizing *à rebours*; it is essentially an amoral moralizing, and an a-human humanism.

Let us say it again: while one can choose between the Marxist and the existentialist position, it is impossible to combine them harmoniously. Hence an important conclusion must be drawn: sooner or later Sartre himself will have to make a choice between the contradictory elements of his views.

Does this mean that to be a Marxist one must give up the study of the problems dealt with by existentialism? By no means. The whole of this essay is devoted to the defence of the contrary approach.

In "Marxism and Existentialism," Sartre emphasizes that his existentialism is only designed to fill the gap that has arisen in Marxism, and that once this gap has been filled existentialism will lose its *raison d'être* as an independent philosophical trend.

Everything depends on how we interpret this statement. If it implies "supplementing" Marxism with existentialist theory and method, the whole proposition is pointless, since fire cannot be supplemented with water. If, on the other hand, what Sartre means is that the problems of man—which for different reasons have been, historically, monopolized by existentialism—should be tackled by Marxism and on the basis of Marxist method, this

is an important proposition, deserving a most careful and penetrating analysis.

It is thus necessary to give a definite answer to the following questions: What are the problems involved? What new problems should be theoretically discussed from the point of view of Marxism? Which of the problems raised by existentialism are worth tackling from an opposed theoretical position?

What is it that particularly attracts people in existentialism? A careful analysis will reveal that two great groups of problems deserve special attention: (a) personal responsibility for one's own actions, also in the field of politics, particularly in situations involving a conflict of various moral principles; and (b) the place and role of the individual in the world; this latter issue is rather vaguely and nebulously described as the problems of the "meaning of life."

(Both groups of problems belong to a widely conceived science of morals, but—unfortunately—they had no place in the traditional development program of Marxist ethics; that is why we cannot be satisfied with the general thesis that "Marxist ethics should be developed." The point is how the subject and scope of such ethics are actually interpreted.)

When an existentialist tackles the problem of man's responsibility, he does it in a rhetorical and abstract manner. And he can hardly do otherwise, since, treating as he does the problem of the individual and of his freedom of decision—and, consequently of his responsibility—in isolation from the social and historical context, he sees the Individual and Responsibility as abstractions. Sartre, it is true, is aware of the element of conflict inherent in situations in which a choice of principles of conduct must be made (of this he gave a theoretical expression in *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* and his literary works), but he maintains that this choice is a free act of the individual. The point is not to imitate the existentialists' approach to the problems; on the contrary, this approach must be vigorously opposed. The appeal of existentialism, however, is not due to the way in which it raised the problem, but to the fact that it raised it at all.

Marxism has never denied the legitimacy of the problem, but it has never tackled or developed it in its entirety.

And the issue is of no small import, particularly at present and particularly for the left-wing milieu. The question of responsibility for one's own actions has presented itself to people not in an abstract way, but as a most practical issue, in the context of a possible conflict between party discipline and the individual conscience, or of the personal responsibility of men and women who, even though their actions were not prompted by any personal considerations, but by the conviction that they were fulfilling their social duty, did things which were objectively wrong. The question of responsibility was thus raised by life itself, in a most concrete manner, and with a clear indication of the element of moral conflict inherent in certain situations in life.

To questions put in this way, existentialism could provide no answer. And yet it has been making quite a "career" out of this situation. It must be borne in mind, first, that the subjectivist-voluntarist concepts of the individual and his freedom (these matters are inseparably linked with each other) grew up in existentialism, among other things, as a reaction against the difficulty of interpreting man's freedom within the framework of a determinist system; and, second, that—as has already been pointed out—in the controversy over these matters the Marxists failed to appear on the battlefield.

The problem is extremely complicated, and it requires research into a number of issues—first of all into the sociological question of the individual in society and, in this connection, into the dialectical interdependence between individual freedom and the necessity arising from social determinants. This matter has a solid theoretical foundation in Marxist doctrine. But the other issues have been seriously neglected, and as far as they are concerned everything remains to be done. Foremost among them is the problem of responsibility, which has a sociological, a psychological, and a strictly moral aspect. Finally, there is the most difficult question: that of the situations involving a moral conflict and of ensuing modifications of the problem of responsibility.

Moral philosophy has normally overlooked the fact that the situations in which a moral evaluation of man's conduct is implied in most cases involve a moral conflict. What is more, moral

philosophy has normally simplified its task by providing absolute solutions to moral problems, that is, solutions which are independent of time, space, and social surroundings. That is the foundation on which all religions have erected their systems of morals and on which the various systems of what is known as lay ethics have based their conceptions of morality.

We are thus confronted with two closely interconnected tasks: to explain ethical historicism without getting involved in relativism, and, on this basis, to explain the problem of situations containing elements of moral conflict.

All systems of "absolute" ethics, that is, those constructed on allegedly eternal and unchangeable moral principles, are helpless in the face of the problem which so often occurs in life—the problem of situations in which there is a clash of moral norms, in which to do good at the same time inevitably means to do evil. For if the so-called sinner does not know which moral principle is binding for him in a given situation, it is normally not because he does not know the principle (it is on the basis of this complacent conviction that the moralists step in with their pompous, absolute injunctions and prohibitions) but because a number of contradictory norms may be applied to this situation, and he cannot make a decision as to which of them should be given priority. This is what might be called the problem of Orestes. These and similar situations turn all "absolutist" moral systems upside down, religious and lay alike. Existentialism is to be commended for having raised this theoretical question, although it has not been in a position to solve it. Potentially, Marxism is best equipped to solve it; but so far this has been only a possibility.

Another large group of problems is concerned with matters which philosophical trends claiming to be scientific treat only with some reluctance. This is due both to a certain obscurity in these problems and to their traditional encumbrances, owing to which they may be regarded as belonging to the realm of religion, mysticism, or poetry, rather than to that of science (that is why, as has already been pointed out, neopositivism classified them under the heading of "pseudo-problems"). Nevertheless, a problem does exist here: it has attracted the attention of mankind since time immemorial and recently it has made a

large contribution to the successes of existentialism. It certainly requires some kind of solution on the basis of Marxist method. Let us see what is concealed behind the veil of vague words.

In the Book of Ecclesiastes is written: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." These words, which are to be found in all oriental philosophies in one form or another, are something very near to every man who, on growing old, begins to ponder over life and death. One can smile pityingly when one hears of such problems, but one cannot simply reject them—neither that which occurs to a man who, tired with his difficulties and failures in life, asks "what for?", "why?"; nor, even less, that which imposes itself in connection with the thought of death—"why all this if we have to die anyway?" It is difficult to resist the powerful conviction that death is senseless, particularly if it is unnecessary, accidental, etc. Certainly, we should ask: senseless, but from what point of view? If from that of Nature, then it is full of meaning, although it is rather unlikely that anybody will derive sufficient consolation from the fact that by providing food for maggots and plants he is making an important contribution to the life of Nature. From the point of view of the individual, of his activity and his life, death is completely senseless; it is something that undermines the meaning of all our actions. It is this feeling of senselessness that religions have tried to counteract in one way or another: the ancient and very wise religions of the East have pointed to Nirvana as the ultimate end, thus endowing death with a clear meaning; others, far more primitive, have offered faith in life beyond the grave, in their own way doing away with the senselessness of death. But what remains when religion itself loses its meaning?

It is no good making fun of this problem, or denying its existence—if only because the well-known cases of atheists being converted on their deathbeds give us good reason for reflection. It is philosophy which must take the place of religion, and it must tackle the diverse problems which remain when the religious view of the world disappears—the senselessness of suffering; personal failures in life; death; and many other issues connected with the destinies of the living, struggling, suffering, and dying individual. Can this be done in a scientific way, that is, in a way which is both communicable and subject to some

kind of verification (historical and social as well)? By all means—although not in the same way as in physics or chemistry. And that is why both the neopositivists, with their pseudo-problems, and the Marxists, with their neglect of these problems, were wrong.

It has not been my intention here to analyze in full the meaning of the postulate, "to develop Marxist ethics." I have only tried to point to certain concrete aspects of this postulate, connected with the current ideological struggle, by indicating those problems of existentialist theory which are vital and worth attacking. To avoid any misunderstandings, I wish to emphasize once more that the recognition of the existence and vitality of some of these problems does not by any means imply the acceptance of the existentialist position on these matters, or of the way and method by which existentialism poses and solves these questions. On the contrary, to take up these problems from the Marxist position would be to oppose existentialism and set these issues once more in their proper perspective. And yet there is something that we can take from existentialism: the problem itself, which existentialism recognized, while we have either overlooked or underestimated it. We take it because it has proved vital, because it reflects certain objective needs and questions, and thus we take it from life, but through the intermediary of another philosophical trend. What is more, we have also shown that to adopt a nihilist attitude towards a problem only because it has been raised by a philosophical trend with which we are in general disagreement is a gross error which redounds not against our opponents, but against ourselves. Life has recently taught us a serious lesson in this field. That is precisely why it is worthwhile to give the problem the form of a theoretical generalization.

It is significant that almost all our latter-day prophets of decline, our skeptics who see no meaning in history and assume that progress is dead, belong to that sector of the world and to that class of society which have triumphantly played a leading and predominant part in the advance of civilization for several generations. It is no consolation to them to be told that the role that their group has played in the past will now pass to others. Clearly a history which has played so scurvy a trick on them cannot be a meaningful or rational process.

—E. H. Carr, *What Is History?*

SOCIALIST SOCIETIES: THE SEAMY SIDE

BY EUGENE J. READE

For all its industrial and military might, for all its social and scientific achievements, the Soviet Union fails to provide its citizens with many of the amenities of life taken for granted in socialist Eastern Europe.

The pertinent question is not whether Russian living standards will catch and surpass United States standards. That remains a distant prospect. The more immediate issue is whether Russians will some day obtain accoutrements of modern living already enjoyed by their neighbors in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Rumania.

A three-month automobile tour of the Soviet Union and these six small countries of Eastern Europe hardly qualifies one as an expert on life under socialism. But it does permit inevitable comparisons, many of them unfavorable to the Soviet Union. In none of these six other socialist lands is there so large a gap between what could be and what is. Soviet consumer goods are generally higher priced. Stores are drabber and poorer stocked. Lines are longer. Restaurants are fewer and service slower. Newspapers are thinner. Architecture is less imaginative. The countryside is poorer.

Reasons for this uneven development of socialism are many and complex. The Soviet Union paid the price of pioneering socialism, making mistakes that followers managed to avoid. It suffered terribly in the war (but so did Poland and Yugoslavia). Since then it has carried the bulk of the burden of developing heavy industry and advanced weaponry to protect itself and its neighbors from Western attack. Unlike Yugoslavia, it has received no U.S. aid. Unlike Czechoslovakia, it was a backward nation when it came to socialism. But so were Rumania and Bulgaria and, in only slightly lesser degree, Poland and Hungary.

Eugene J. Reade is an American who travelled by automobile for three months last summer in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Why then have these countries gained in 17 years certain creature comforts still scarce in the Soviet Union after 45 years of socialism?

An American progressive who has formed his view of the USSR primarily from left-wing press accounts, which too often extol the good and ignore the bad, is prey to disillusionment when he sees the real thing. He may feel betrayed and is under temptation to exaggerate the unpleasantnesses he encounters. But if he is fair he must concede there are exceptions to the general rule; Soviet consumers are not worse off in all regards. For example, food is more monotonous in Poland, where bread plus boiled potatoes and cabbage is the established menu, even for breakfast, in all ordinary restaurants. Gasoline is higher in Czechoslovakia—\$1.15 a gallon against 22 cents in the USSR.* And while the Soviet Union has its share of backwater misery (particularly evident in Stalin's home town of Gori), the traveler is unlikely to see anything there quite so squalid as the large Gypsy shacktown on the outskirts of Bulgaria's second city of Plovdiv. Gypsies, parenthetically, seem the forgotten people of the socialist world, often scorned and sometimes segregated.

Nothing approaching the American supermarket is to be found in the Soviet Union. The Russian housewife buys her bread in one store, her butter in a second, her potatoes in a third. After waiting to have her potatoes weighed, she receives a slip. She then joins another queue before the cashier who reckons, if reckoning is necessary, on an abacus. The cashier takes the shopper's kopecks and stamps her slip. She then returns to the produce clerk and picks up her potatoes. This time-consuming system is not confined to the Soviet Union. The difference is that other countries realize its inefficiency and are rapidly making amends. For example, Bucharest and most other Rumanian cities now have modern grocery stores which compare favorably with the best of U.S. supermarkets in decor and cleanliness, if not in variety and plenitude of food. They even have shopping baskets and check-out counters.

* Prices throughout are figured at the tourist rate of exchange, and metric measurements converted to U.S. standards.

Although the staples of the Russian diet—bread, beets, cabbage, potatoes, etc.—are reasonably priced, it is otherwise with meat, dairy products, and fresh fruit. The same cheeses that cost the Russian \$1.45 to \$1.75 a pound can be had for 61 to 85 cents in Rumania. Apples of ordinary quality cost 75 cents a pound in the Soviet Union, only 14 cents a pound in both Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. Seedless grapes at 65 cents a pound in the Soviet Union average 18 cents in Hungary, 6 cents in Yugoslavia. Fruits and vegetables that are plentiful in Soviet Georgia are scarce in Moscow; the country's vastness and the primitiveness of its transport compound tasks of distribution. Canned goods are practically unknown, and luxury foods can reach astronomical price levels. This traveler twice made the mistake of buying without first asking, and wound up paying 55 cents for a single orange in Leningrad and \$1.06 for a loaf of raisin bread in Tbilisi.

Soviet hotel restaurants, which even during the summer tourist season number more Russians than foreigners among their clientele, are inferior to those in all East European countries except Poland. Russian food is generally good and reasonably priced, although large bowls of delicious soup run to \$1.63. But service is excruciatingly slow. Waiters spend more time in the kitchen than the dining room. When they do finally appear, it is empty handed or carrying one lonely dish. None seems to have learned the knack of fitting two plates in one hand and balancing another on the forearm. The expectation of a tip does nothing to speed their step. (Only two waiters of some 200 tipped in the USSR and East Europe politely declined the gratuity). So leisurely is the pace—this tourist's personal record was a two-hour, 45-minute dinner in Moscow's Metropol Hotel—that the American soon gets the impression he is spending half his Soviet stay just getting fed. To make matters worse, he has to sit still while a brassy dinner band blares pseudo-American jazz.

Contrast this to Hungary where string ensembles treat diners to lovely classical music, where restaurants are many and service impeccable. Every knife and every fork knows its appointed place on every table. Waiters serve dishes with a

flourish. They fairly rush to satisfy every whim, and when the patron leaves, are apt to bow and exclaim, "It was my pleasure!"

Of course, Hungary, particularly Budapest, has a pre-socialist heritage of Western cosmopolitanism and sycophantish service to its privileged class. But how explain the backwardness of Soviet restaurants? Several possibilities occur. A Soviet restaurant manager has no fear of losing customers because he knows there are many more than restaurants to accommodate them. Waiters and waitresses are inadequately trained and insufficient in number. A Kiev radio commentator who interviewed this American on his reaction to Titov's space flight offered his own off-the-air appraisal: "Do you really want to know why your breakfast took an hour and a half this morning? Because the restaurant workers don't care. Why should they? They know they won't be fired. It is practically impossible to fire a worker for incompetence."

Russians and Poles are hard vodka drinkers, and both countries have serious problems of alcoholism. Vodka is served publically only in restaurants and only then with food. This food requirement is seldom an insuperable barrier to the serious drinker. It is not unusual to see four men sharing a liter of vodka while munching on a cucumber each. Whereas Poland has many wine shops and Czechoslovakia even more beer halls, the USSR has very few wine shops and no beer halls. But now that it has adopted such Western recreations as auto racing, tennis, and golf, it may soon permit the corner pub as well.

Clothing seems scarcer and costlier in the Soviet Union. Once in Moscow and again in Leningrad this observer quite by accident came across some 50 women lined up on the sidewalk before a clerk with ledger and pencil. The Intourist guide's explanation was the same on both occasions: The women are waiting to get their names on a waiting list for sweaters to be delivered sometime in the future.

The average Russian earns more than the average East European, but not so much more as to offset the far higher cost of many of the things he buys. Men's suits comparable in quality to those tagged at \$117 to \$187 in the Soviet Union can be had for \$63 to \$84 in Czechoslovakia, \$37 to \$51 in Hungary, \$30 to \$50 in Rumania, \$20 to \$39 in Yugoslavia. A typical pair of

men's shoes is \$30 in the Soviet Union, \$20 in Czechoslovakia, \$15 in Hungary, and \$8 in Yugoslavia.

It's the same with appliances. A Soviet television set comparable in size to an American 14-inch model sells for \$355; in Hungary a 17-inch set is \$182.50; and in Yugoslavia 21-inch sets start at \$201. Price is no measure of quality. Czech appliances, as well as shoes, are highly prized everywhere. All socialist countries export their best products, often to the despair of their own product-hungry citizens. Bulgaria, for instance, ships its best fruit to Western as well as Eastern Europe in sleek West German trailer trucks cooled by U.S. refrigeration equipment.

Bulgaria also imports a few Western goods. A boisterous juke box in a Sofia restaurant was discovered to be the product of Rock-Ola Manufacturing Corp. of Chicago. It was vomiting American decadence until someone with taste inserted a half leva coin and punched Paul Robeson singing "Joe Hill" and "The Volga Boatman."

Certain Western goods are available at luxury prices in other capitals. A fifth of Black and White is \$23.10 in Prague. Warsaw offers Gillette razors at \$18.25 and \$7.50 cans of Prince Albert pipe tobacco. All Eastern European countries, but particularly Yugoslavia and Rumania, import some French, West German, British, and even U.S. autos. But not a single item of Western manufacture for sale was encountered anywhere in the USSR, unless one counts publications like the *Daily Worker* of London and the *Worker* of New York.

The weekend *Worker*, which sells for 15 cents in the U.S., is a bargain at 7 kopecks (less than 8 cents) there. It is also indispensable to the tourist. For only in Yugoslavia are Western commercial dailies available on newsstands, although certain hotels in Warsaw sell the Paris edition of the *New York Times*. It is hard to understand how Russians can be satisfied with their four- and six-page dailies. *Pravda* resembles a polemical quarterly more than a news daily. It is long on dissertations on Baku oil production, Soviet-Rumanian friendship, harvest festivals. It is replete with pictures of steel workers, collective milkmaids, and visiting Chinese. But it is short on everyday news of major and minor happenings. Take the mud slide that killed 145 persons

SOCIALIST SOCIETIES: THE SEAMY SIDE

on the outskirts of Kiev on March 13, 1961. The radio reported this disaster the same day, but 18 days passed before *Pravda Ukrainy* or any other Soviet newspaper carried a single line.

Leading dailies in Eastern Europe are generally thicker and newsier. Some, like Warsaw's *Życie Warszawy* and Sarajevo's *Oslobodenje*, are crammed with news, pictures, and features, and compare favorably with the best popular dailies in West Europe.

It is no more possible to judge Soviet life from what one sees in Moscow than it is to judge France by Paris or the United States by New York. It is only when one leaves the broad boulevards, monuments, and cathedrals, sheds his Intourist guide, and ventures out unescorted into the countryside that he gets even a superficial idea of how the majority of Russians live.

The first thing that strikes, and frustrates, one is the truck traffic that chokes highways into and out of cities. Nearly all these trucks are small and painted a uniform drab green. Except at harvest time they are more often empty, or crowded with town-going collective farmers, than loaded with freight. They go a long way before rating an overhaul, to judge by the high proportion that break down along the road. Rear view mirrors are practically unknown. Many trucks lack windshield wipers as well. When it rains the driver opens the door and steers with his face in the rain, his left hand holding the door, his right hand on the wheel, his left foot on the running board and his right on the accelerator. What these beleaguered fellows need is a Soviet Jimmy Hoffa and a union as strong as the Teamsters to enforce elementary rules of safety. Rattletraps are rare in Eastern Europe; the typical truck is bigger, safer, and painted a pleasant red or blue.

All but the most advanced countries pour the bulk of their resources into their large cities, allowing the countryside to go pretty much to pot. The Soviet Union, alas, has yet to bridge this gulf between city and village. One passes hamlets, some within 50 miles of Moscow, that look as though the revolution had never touched them, as though they had remained unchanged since Marx wrote of the "idiocy of rural life." They are all much alike. A dozen or two plaster or wood huts, many with thatched roofs, others with sagging frame roofs, most with

bulging walls. Each surrounded by its own unpainted picket fence. In the rear a shed or two, a pile of firewood, and a privy. Poorly dressed peasants in high rubber boots sloshing through ponds of mud and stagnant water, carrying buckets to and from the village well. The picture is not always this depressing, of course. One occasionally sees a settlement of neat new cottages. There are more amenities in the provincial cities, but many of these still lack central sewer systems and household running water.

Such neglect is less evident in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Rumania. The typical farmer seems better housed and his land better tended. Yugoslavia leads in rehabilitating small cities. Just one of its many achievements is the newly reconstructed heart of Titovo Uzice with its breathtakingly beautiful collection of buildings and gardens.

Socialist countries have few beggars. No census is taken of them and a visitor has no way of knowing how many there are except by the very imperfect yardstick of how many he personally meets. This observer's total: none in Czechoslovakia; one each in Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Bulgaria; three in Poland; and five in the Soviet Union. These five were full-time mendicants, not mere semi-professionals out to make a touch on rich capitalist tourists. In addition, one Sunday morning found more than a dozen wrinkled old crones, relics of another age, with upturned palms lining the stone steps of a Russian Orthodox cathedral in Krasnodar in southern Russia. And only in the USSR did this tourist encounter children trying to wheedle chewing gum and ballpoint pens, and young men offering to buy the jacket off his back.

Is it that Russians are simply less inhibited than their neighbors in coveting Western doodads? Or is this another sign of impatience at the steady but still slow advance in consumer goods and services? The Russians have waited long. They evince willingness to make further sacrifices for the commonweal, for the advance of heavy industry, defensive weapons, and space technology. One hopes that an end to their austerity will soon be in sight.

WORLD EVENTS

By Scott Nearing

A Philosopher's Stone For Imperialists

Half a dozen mature European empires were sprawled across the planet when the United States cut its imperial eye-teeth by defeating Spain in a sixty-day war and taking from her Cuba and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean and the Philippine archipelago in the far Pacific. Since that day the Johnnie-come-lately of the Western powers has been working out a technique that will consolidate overseas wealth and multiply profits on foreign investments without running afoul of the two basic shibboleths of the mid-20th century: Independence and Self-determination.

President William McKinley in 1898 and his eight successors, including the present occupant of the White House, have looked long and earnestly for the philosopher's stone of 20th-century imperialism. President John F. Kennedy has come closer to an answer than any of his predecessors. His formula is simplicity itself:

- (1) Discover or fabricate an obvious moral imperative.
- (2) Do not grab foreign territory. Instead give generous aid, both economic and military, to strategically located foreign governments that understand "the rule of reason."
- (3) Keep the aided governments on the anxious bench by supplying the aid in monthly installments.
- (4) If the chief of an aided state hesitates to cooperate wholeheartedly with Washington, local military leaders whose positions depend on continued United States aid will find another chief of state who will take orders.
- (5) Supplement aid by establishing enough air and naval bases, occupied by U.S. personnel, to guarantee compliance with Washington's needs or wishes.
- (6) If there is hot war, let Europeans, Asians, Africans, and

Latin Americans do the fighting and dying on their respective continents. Washington will supervise, will pick up the scattered pieces, and fight "only when necessary."

This formula did not originate in the brain of any individual; it matured as an accepted pattern of United States foreign policy. As new situations arose, the formula was modified to meet the new conditions. The formula, diplomatically applied, enabled Washington to relieve Britain and France of the responsibility for patrolling the Mediterranean; enabled Washington to relieve Japan and Britain of the responsibility for maintaining peace and order in the Pacific; enabled Washington to relieve London of the responsibility for the sea and air approaches to Western Europe. Currently it is being employed to give Washington solid footholds in Southeast Asia.

Regional War in Laos and Vietnam

Western man lives an acquisitive competitive life called the "American Way," or "Western Civilization." One aspect of this is war preparations leading up to periodic orgies of wholesale destruction and mass murder. This war aspect of the Western Way is being exported to Southeast Asia by the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the State Department, under the personal supervision of the President.

Most United States citizens know little about the geography of Southeast Asia and still less about its history. Names like Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam arouse only the haziest reactions in the mind of the average American. Yet as we write these words, "like it or not, admit it or not, we are involved in a shooting war in South Vietnam. We have our airforce in combat operations. Our rangers and special forces are in hand-to-hand combat in jungles and on the delta in Mekong. American troops in battle uniforms, fully armed, are killing and being killed. American officers are in full command of military operations. . . . Our active military participation is on the increase."

This quotation is by an N.B.C. correspondent and is taken from page 124 of *Cash and Violence in Laos and Vietnam*, an important book written by Anna Louise Strong and recently published by New Century Publishers. Robinson, the correspondent, added that U.S. officials in Saigon told him: "We must

win this war even if we have to attack North Vietnam."

The American people, as well as the people of Southeast Asia, owe Anna Louise Strong a debt of gratitude for writing this book. They owe an equal debt to New Century for publishing it. The American people owe this debt because the book throws much needed light on recent events in Southeast Asia in the same way that *The Hidden History of the Korean War* by I. F. Stone (published in 1952 by Monthly Review Press) cast light on the struggle in Korea.

The Southeast Asians owe a debt of gratitude to anyone who throws the light of truth on their situation because they hope to persuade the United Nations (or any other qualified body) to organize a rescue squad for the assistance of Southeast Asia before it is completely occupied by United States armed forces.

In February, 1962, according to the London *Observer*, units from the United States Seventh Fleet were patrolling the South Vietnam coast to intercept boats from North Vietnam that might attempt to smuggle arms. In March, the Washington government was assuming "moral responsibility" for the forcible resettlement in virtual concentration camps of thousands of Vietnamese rural families whose villages might be used as hide-outs for guerrillas. On March 15, 1962, Defense Secretary McNamara stated at a news conference that United States military personnel were in South Vietnam at the request of the government "to provide training." He added: "There has been sporadic fire aimed at United States personnel and in certain minor instances they've had to return that fire."

During the last days of April, 1962, United States citizens were told in guarded language that "Operation Sunrise" was becoming a full-scale war. On April 28, the *New York Times* ran two front-page stories, blaming China for the turn of affairs. One story dated from Washington was headlined "More Peiping Aid in Vietnam Seen." The headline on the other story, dated from Hong Kong, read: "Peiping Says U.S. is Planning War."

A Vietnam story in the *New York Times* of May 1 led off with a Washington report of a speech made to the Detroit Economic Club by George W. Ball, Under Secretary of State. Headlined "Long Slow Fight in Vietnam/Under Secretary Tells of U.S. Role in Arduous War," the first paragraph of the story

quoted Ball as warning that "the war against the Communist guerrilla invaders in South Vietnam would be a 'long, slow, arduous struggle.'"

Thus, by the end of April or beginning of May, after previous denials, the regional war in Southeast Asia was officially acknowledged. It was excused and explained by insisting and underlining the statements that aside from planning, leading, financing, equipping, and transporting the South Vietnam armed forces, the five thousand or so United States military personnel in Vietnam were taking practically no part in the war.

War in Korea began June 25, 1950, as a "police action." It lasted three years and cost the United States 33,629 battle deaths, 20,617 other deaths, and 103,284 wounded. Losses to the Koreans were far heavier. The Korean War was "regional," not general; but in terms of casualties it was the third most costly of the foreign wars that have been fought by the United States.

President Kennedy's personal military adviser, General Taylor, assures the American people that the war in Laos and Vietnam will remain "regional" not global. Can General Taylor give any guarantees that this regional war will not last for eight years, as did the French war in the same area, with casualties and property destruction equally high?

Cash and Violence in Laos and Vietnam gives a wealth of detail on this second military aggression carried out under White House direction since President Kennedy assumed office in January, 1961. (The first operation was the invasion of Cuba, on April 17, 1961.) Part of the detail given in *Cash and Violence* is based on research. Part is the product of first-hand observation by the author on the spot in Southeast Asia.

East Asian Variant of the American Empire Formula

Washington's empire-building principles are being adapted to the local conditions of Southeast Asia. The moral imperative has been underlined: "Communism is evil. Unless Washington intervenes, the Communists will take over Laos and Vietnam. We must do our bit to prevent the spread of evil in the world."

Governments in Laos and South Vietnam live on United States aid. Both governments are locally unpopular. Neither

could last for thirty days if United States aid were withdrawn. Talk is rife that neither President Ngo Dinh Diem nor General Nosavan is the right man in the right place. The problem is to find more dependable successors.

In accordance with principle 6 (above) most of the fighting in Southeast Asia is being done by Filipinos, Formosan Chinese, Thais, Laotians, and Vietnamese. United States armed personnel, numbering five thousand or more, are not "combat troops," but advisers and handy men. They fire only when fired upon, though going everywhere in the fighting zone.

So far, war in Southeast Asia is following the lines laid down by Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy, while the world watches and prepares. Four other parties are still to be heard from: Washington's European allies, the Soviet Union, the United Nations, and the governments and peoples of Southeast Asia.

London and Paris have refused point-blank to take part in Washington's Southeast Asian adventure. The Soviet Union has issued stern warnings against United States participation in the Laos-Vietnam war. The United Nations has taken no action, though its Charter and the Geneva Treaty of 1954 are being flagrantly violated by United States military participation in the Southeast Asian conflict. The Southeast Asians apprehensively face war on homeland territory.

As China Sees It

Among the three leading world powers (the Soviet Union, the United States, and People's China) the Chinese are most immediately involved in the Laos-Vietnam war. From the Chinese point of view, the parallel with the Korean conflict is close—too close. North Vietnam and Laos, like North Korea, border on People's China. Not only is there talk in Washington of taking over North Vietnam, but air space there has already been invaded and proposals are being made which look to the subjugation of North Vietnam as a part of the program for containing and constricting Communism in Southeast Asia. If such moves are made, China will undoubtedly become involved. When United States-led forces from South Korea moved to the Chinese frontier, Chinese volunteers appeared on the scene.

N.B. the following straws in the wind: (1) According to the *Peking Review* of March 9th, Peking solidarity meetings addressed by high Chinese officials have promised support for Vietnam under the slogan: "U.S. Imperialists Must Get Out of South Vietnam." (2) "Pentagon sources are putting out word that President Kennedy is being cautioned to expect the worst in South Vietnam—massive intervention by Red Chinese similar to their attack in the Korean War." (*U.S. News & World Report*, May 7.)

China's point of view is summed up in the closing pages of *Cash and Violence in Laos and Vietnam*:

What is likely to happen now in Southeast Asia? I discussed it on New Year's Day of 1962 with several American 'old-timers' who have watched Washington's ways in the East and who saw how America 'lost' China. We came up with this:

American imperialism, militarily and economically, is the strongest the world has seen. But internally it is unstable, for it rises in an epoch when imperialism is already discredited. . . . If American imperialism persists in conducting a war in Vietnam, its defeat will be worse than in the Korean War. . . . American intervention will weld North and South again as they were against France; it will break down whatever compunctions remain in Hanoi. The Vietnamese, united, will call on the people and governments of the world for aid. If they need it, they will get it. . . .

Whether Communists come to power in Laos, Vietnam, and Southeast Asia will not be determined by American arms but by the people of Laos, Vietnam, and Southeast Asia. Washington cannot prevent this except by wiping out all the people, and to do so is impossible without losing the world. . . .

Americans do not belong here, while China has been an influence here for centuries, through handicraft, culture and conquest, in war or peace. Today China has not a single soldier in Southeast Asia; in this Peking shows sense. China will get further with gifts of rice-transplanters and textile factories than Washington with bombs.

Philanthropy means to steal wholesale, and to give away retail.

—Paul Lafargue

BOOKS

A PASSIONATE DIALOGUE

By Dorothy Monet Rosenwald

In 1959, the eminent philosopher, Günther Anders, read an article in *Newsweek* about Claude Eatherly, the pilot who flew the lead plane over Hiroshima and gave the go-ahead signal to drop the first A-bomb. Eatherly's blistering remorse, his inability to endure so great a burden of guilt, the nightmare of a thriving city turned by his own command into an inferno of charred earth and burning flesh had led him, by way of ever more desperate attempts to vilify himself, "the hero of Hiroshima," to internment in a Veterans Administration Mental Hospital in Waco, Texas. Anders, a great moralist and intellectual, saw immediately in Eatherly, the sacrificial lamb, the bearer of the new stigmata, and resolved to help him. Thus began a two-year correspondence which eventually enabled Claude Eatherly to share his shame and claim his freedom to

condemn the brutalization of man.

As I put down *Burning Conscience*,* the record of this dialogue, I do not have the familiar feeling of having finished a book. Rather, I feel as one who quietly closes the door behind him for a brief respite from an agonizing watch at the bedside of a child who has wrestled bravely with death.

It is not an easy book. The suffering it evokes, though, has been incubating within us and its emergence is something like ecstasy.

What is so devastating to me is not so much the particular predicament of Claude Eatherly nor the reflections and formulations of Günther Anders (the foreword by Robert Jungk I find perhaps more provocative), but that which is virtually indefinable: there is a tension, there is an anguish that stretches taut between these two, travers-

Dorothy Monet Rosenwald, a freelance writer and illustrator, is one of the founders and an active member of Women Strike for Peace.

* *Burning Conscience: the Case of the Hiroshima Pilot Claude Eatherly Told in his Letters to Günther Anders*, Monthly Review Press, \$4.

ing boundaries; between them and myself as well. We are all of us impaled, needle-pointed against a field of dreadful circumstance; yet somehow, these have reached each other, a tremor vibrates among us all. The nausea falls away and we are quickened with horror, cleansed with pain. Therein lies the ecstasy.

The jacket of the British edition of *Burning Conscience* said that Major Eatherly "was a typical 'uncomplicated' young American when he volunteered for service in the Air Force in 1939." I am grateful to the present publishers that they see no need to certify Major Eatherly's titanic remorse via such dubious qualifications. That he was a sane, intelligent, fully functioning young man is clear. In a world where hostility is legislated, "acted out" to the extent of the fiendish destruction at one blow, of 100,000 souls (at Hiroshima), perhaps it follows that a guilt-ridden man is maladjusted. Perhaps Claude Eatherly is the bearer of the new pathology. But then, it is not less fatal than "adjustment" to the holocaust.

Eatherly's letters, temperate and tentative, touching in the awareness of his own intellectual limitations, yet burning with self-judgement and integrity, plead as eloquently in their way as did the young Albert Camus fresh from his own anguish in the same war:

If that unhappy man, the Job of modern times is not to die of his hurts on his dunghill, then must the mortgage of fear and anguish be lifted, so that he may find again that liberty of mind without which none of the problems set for our modern consciousness can be solved.

The words of Günther Anders, firm, fatherly, and full of righteousness, defined for Eatherly his own truths and his own rebellion. In asserting ceaselessly their common humanity, trampling across boundaries, seals, stamps, and affidavits, he taught him the meaning of his agony.

I too, embrace you, my brother, and share your shame, for without it there is little hope of human consciousness.

How very simple, in reality, is the "Eatherly Case," in comparison with "the Case of America"! It is not the sufferings of this Texan pilot which is the real tragedy of this drama, but rather the baleful entanglement of his country and his fellow citizens. In its fight to ensure "freedom from fear," it has brought the terror of the atom into the world; in order to safeguard the freedom and happiness of the individual, it has felt itself compelled to employ the counter-threat of death and destruction to countless millions.

—Robert Jungk, *Foreword to Burning Conscience*

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(Continued from Inside Back Cover)

our special thanks. Will the rest of our readers please note that the offer is still good—and act accordingly?

Next month we will publish the annual double summer issue. Its contents will be two chapters from *Monopoly Capital*, a forthcoming work on the U.S. economic and social order by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy. Ninety-six pages long, the issue will sell at a price of \$1 per copy.

Those of you who will be away for the summer please note: the combined July-August issue will be mailed out on or about July 1. If you will be on vacation in July and there will be no one at home to receive your mail, be sure to send us—*right away*, if possible—your vacation address. If you plan to vacation in August only, then *don't* send us a change of address since no magazine is mailed to you in that month. Happy vacation!

Don't forget . . .

J. RAYMOND WALSH

on

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE NEW FRONTIER?

PAUL M. SWEEZY

on

MEXICO AND THE ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS

Date: Monday, June 4, 8:30 P.M. sharp

Place: Riviera Terrace (air-conditioned), Broadway at 53rd St.



PAPERBACKS

CAPITALISM YESTERDAY AND TODAY by Maurice Dobb (flexible cloth binding)	\$1.00
THE ALIENATION OF MODERN MAN by Fritz Pappenheim	1.25
AMERICAN RADICALS: SOME PROBLEMS AND PERSONALITIES Harvey Goldberg, editor	1.25
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THE PRESENT AS HISTORY by Paul M. Sweezy (flexible cloth binding)	2.95

(Continued from Inside Front Cover)

on oil (see back cover for details) and *Wellington Road* by Margaret Lassell, the searing document on present-day British working-class life. The prepub price of *Wellington Road* is \$2.25 (list, \$3.75).

Paul Baran has written a 32-page foreword for a new printing of his *Political Economy of Growth*. A reply to critics of the original printing, this will be of the greatest interest to all readers of the book. So that present owners of the volume will not have to buy the whole book to get it, we are issuing the new foreword as a separate pamphlet priced at 50 cents a copy. Orders will be filled as soon as the pamphlet is off the press.

We just recently received the good news that the Japanese edition of Fritz Pappenheim's book *The Alienation of Modern Man* has sold over 50,000 copies and a sixth printing of 15,000 copies more is in preparation. We remind you that you can still get it here, too—clothbound, \$4; paper, \$1.25.

Readers will recall that a couple of years ago we ran a lot of "filler" from a book entitled *Pride of State* by J. P. Morray. The excerpts were of such interest to some of you that we received quite a few inquiries as to price, publisher, etc. We wish we could have answered that we had published the book ourselves. Now, at any rate, we have done the next best thing. We have bought the entire remaining stock of the original publisher and are now distributing the book. Its list price is \$4. We are able to offer it at \$2. It is a first-rate piece of work, perhaps more timely today than when it was first published. And at \$2 it is a real book bargain. Please send your orders right away.

Any MR readers who are going to the World's Fair in Seattle are invited to get in touch with Lyle Mercer (747 21st St. North, Seattle 2) who will put them up to the extent that space is available, or help them find accommodations.

Friends of the late John T. McManus can contribute substantially to a biography of his life and work by helping to reassemble records destroyed by fire. Letters, photographs, personal recollections, and anecdotal material pertaining to his years at the *New York Times*, *Time*, *PM*, his leadership of the New York Newspaper Guild, etc., would be particularly appreciated. Please write or call Jane McManus, c/o National Guardian, 197 E. 4 St., New York 9, N.Y. OR 3-3800.

An excellent booklet entitled *Arms Control; A Handbook* has come to our attention. Written by Hofstra College students and published by Hofstra College, Hempstead, N. Y. (no price listed), it contains an especially useful "Glossary of Terms," as well as essays and summaries of major proposals for "stabilizing the arms race."

As most readers know, the great Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros has been sentenced to 8 years in prison for the fantastic "crime" of "social dissolution." Add your voice of protest by writing to President Lopez Mateos on the 8th Hall of the Superior Tribunal of Justice, Mexico D.F.

In last month's Notes From The Editors we expressed a desire to put MR into the hands of more of the young people of the country. We suggested to those of our readers who shared our concern for reaching youth that they "send a one-year gift sub at the specially reduced rate of only \$3 per year, to begin with the September issue when the school season opens, to (1) your own alma mater—either your high school or college library, or (2) any school or college student."

We are grateful to those who have already responded. And to those who have sent to libraries not only a sub but also some MR Press books,

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